"Congress shall make no law..."

The Valley Patriot

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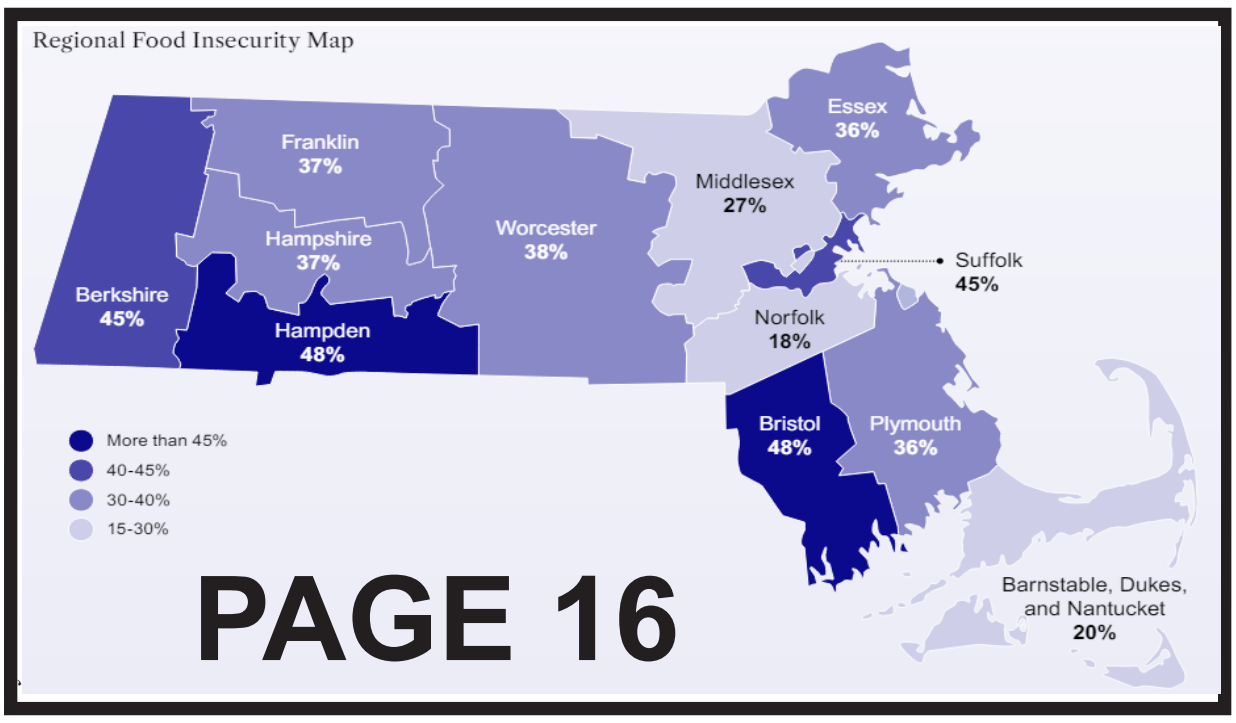

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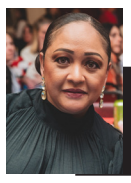

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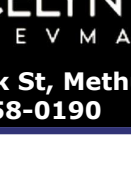

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Valley Patriot of the Month

Navy Seabee, Vet Advocate, & Comedian, Johnny Joyce

John Cuddy
VETERAN COLUMNIST

Growing up in Medford, Massachusetts with six siblings, Johnny Joyce loved baseball and the Boston Red Sox, he played in baseball's Babe Ruth youth program. Shortly after graduating from Medford High with the Class of 1987, Johnny Joyce joined the US Navy Seabees in 1988. He completed basic training at the US Navy's Recruit Training Command San Diego, California. He then attended Seabee Training, completing the basic class A school required for the Builder rating at US Navy Construction Battalion Center Port Hueneme, California.

After completing initial Seabee training, Johnny was assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 5, based out of Port Hueneme, California. While working in the construction trade as a carpenter and mason, he deployed to Naval Station Rota, Spain. The base, occupied by the US Military since 1953, is on the Spanish seacoast, near Cadiz, Spain, and is the homeport of a forward deployed destroyer squadron. He also deployed to Naval Air Station Sigonella, Sicily, Italy. The base is near the city of Catania, where many of Lawrence's Sicilian population immigrated from during the early 1900s. The city is located on Sicily's east coast, facing the Ionian Sea at the base of the active volcano Mount Etna. In late 1985, Seabees belonging to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 133 were repairing and installing sidewalks in the housing area at the Naval Air Station, when they uncovered a small stockpile of World War II German Luftwaffe antiaircraft ammunition. The stockpile had belonged to a Nazi antiaircraft position that had been buried during bombing raids during the Allied invasion of 1943. US Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams (EOD) were called in to clear the area.

Upon his Honorable discharge from the US Navy, he attended Northeast Broadcasting school in Boston, Massachusetts, and Emerson College in Boston. While working at WZLX 100.7, a classic rock station, WMJX 106.7 adult contemporary radio station, and WTKK 1610 Sports News Radio at the same time, he started doing stand-up comedy routines at the Comedy Store and the Laugh Factory.

After the Boston Herald named Johnny Joyce Boston's Funniest Comedian, he undertook a community service project working to support the Medford Strong Krystle Campbell Marathon, which supports the Kyrstle Campbell Scholarship Fund. Krystle Campbell was

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Troubling Accusations Against Methuen Police

A 26-page racism lawsuit filed against the Methuen Police Department by Methuen Police Sgt. Charles DeJesus reads like a 1970's undercover Ku Klux Klan exposé.

Accusations within the lawsuit seem so outrageous that it's almost impossible to believe police officers and police superior officers would dare think - much less say and do - such blatantly racist and hateful things.

According to the suit, DeJesus alleges that his fellow officers and superiors joked about not providing Narcan to Latinos who overdosed on heroin, routinely used slurs like "n**ger, sp*c, animals, black lives don't matter, called for "ethnic cleansing" and "burn Lawrence down from the inside out."

Also contained within the pages of the lawsuit, it is revealed that many in the Methuen Police Department blamed former Chief Joe Solomon for the racist attitudes among the ranks of Methuen PD, but that once Solomon retired, the atmosphere of intimidation, threats, racist comments, and discriminatory actions actually got worse.

In fact, the lawsuit reveals that DeJesus reached out to a member of the Methuen City Council, and someone in the Perry administration pleading for help (during the Saba, McCarty, Simard city council 2 years ago), but that they had no interest in addressing the blatant racism in the PD.

Instead, Dejesus claims, the city councilor he approached ignored his pleas for help and tried to enlist him in manufacturing dirt on Joe Solomon so that he could get Chief Solomon fired.

When DeJesus refused to set up Solomon as their patsy, he never heard back from that councilor or anyone from the Perry administration ever again.

What's worse, DeJesus says that whenever he tried to go through the process of addressing his concerns within the department, he was retaliated against, threatened, and even mocked during roll call, and by superior officers who told him that he was only making things worse for himself.

We are very troubled by the accusations contained within this lawsuit, but we are even more troubled that this suit could be settled out of court with DeJesus getting a huge payday from the taxpayers, complete with a non-disclosure agreement that would conceal the identities of exactly which councilor covered up racism, which officers used the "n" word, and which superior officers threatened him and retaliated against him.

Such a settlement would mean nobody pays a price for what Sgt. DeJesus allegedly had to endure while serving the taxpayers of Methuen on Mayor Neil Perry's watch.

It would mean the Perry Administration and everyone responsible for what happened will get to continue on with no incentive to clean up their acts, meaning this behavior will continue unimpeded.

We urge Sgt. DeJesus to resist a large payout and demand his day in court so that the public can learn exactly what happened and who was responsible. ◊

Pot - Kettle - Black

Ted Xenakis
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

We all know that expression about the hypocrisy of those who criticize someone else for doing the same thing as those who criticize. It's a case of the Pot Calling the Kettle Black. It's the classic case of Do What I Say and Not as I do.

Well, we see this very hypocrisy happening today in the Biden Administration's handling of US policy in the Israeli-Hamas War.

The October 7th terrorist attacks by Hamas on Israeli is the equivalent of the attacks on America on 9/11. In fact, given Israel's population of only 9,311,652, the deaths of 1,200 people represents a much larger percentage of the Americans killed on 9/11 as a percentage of the total population.

Unlike 9/11, the October 7th attack on Israel and the existence of Hamas, Hezbollah, and other proxy groups of Iran, present an actual existential threat to the continued existence of the State of Israel. The chant of "From the River to the Sea" would have an American equivalent of "From the Atlantic to the Pacific."

While the latter is unimaginable, the former is anything but. Surrounded by Arab and other Muslim nations that would readily destroy Israel if given the chance, Israel must live every day with the knowledge that the world could change in a moment, except for the support of America and Western Europe.

I think I can safely say that throughout human history, no other people have been so savagely attacked and destroyed like the Jewish people. To me, it is a total mystery, and the most grievous of all sustained human depravity and evil.

Sadly, we see it again being played out on the streets of America and in the highest levels of our government. How else does one explain the attacks and threats directed at Jewish students on our university campuses? Why would anyone go after an American student who happens to be Jewish because of what the country of Israel is doing to defend itself?

What is the connection in the minds of those who level such attacks and threats other than pure antisemitism? Do the attackers think a Jewish kid (and they are just kids) going to college is somehow responsible for the actions of the Israeli military?

The latest decision by Joe Biden's handlers to withhold congressionally approved military aid to Israeli is simply a political ploy to placate the rabid left of the Democrat Party. That party left is ripe with antisemitism.

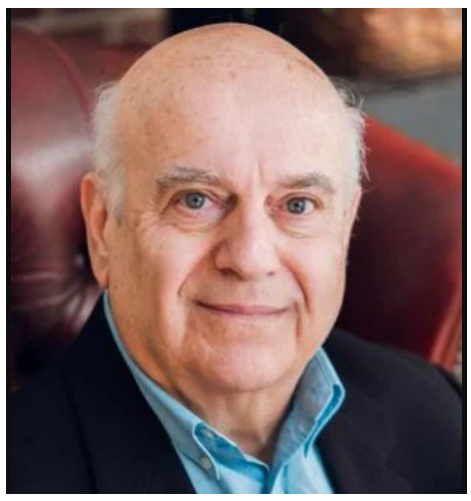
Of course, Biden says his is holding back only those offensive weapons Israel needs to finish the job, not the defensive weapons required to protect itself from missile and drone attacks. Whoop Dee Doo!

I guess Israel can continue to exist with the daily threat of attacks by its sworn enemies, as long as America keeps sending defensive systems. Is that something any American would accept here in our country? I think not.

The thinking (if I can apply that term to Joe Biden) to this weapon withholding is to force Israel to give up its goal of destroying Hamas and settle for some kind of two state solution with neighbors who are sworn to destroy Israel. The paramount reason for this arm twisting are the reports (by Hamas) of civilian casualties thus far and those anticipated if Israel goes into Rafah to finish the job.

This is where American hypocrisy raises its ugly head. I invite you to go to this link: https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/figures. It's a report from the Watson Institute of Brown University. It gives a graphic account of America's theaters of war since 9/11.

Remember, 9/11 prompted the 20-year war in Afghanistan that ended with a sorrowful and flaccid withdrawal



from a conflict that accomplished nothing. Shortly after the launch of that missionless adventure, we went into Iraq in search of the ever-elusive weapons of mass destruction.

In the process, according to the aforementioned Brown report 905,000 to 940,000 people died "…directly in the violence of the wars in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and elsewhere are approximated here. Several times as many civilians have died due to the reverberating effects of these wars."

Moreover, the report states, "The number of people killed indirectly

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Keep America Strong!

Auditing CARES Funding Spent in Massachusetts

IN YOUR CORNER with AUDITOR DIZOGLIO

Hello Valley Patriot readers,

During the darkest days of 2020, when the economy was freefalling and we were all learning to stay healthy, Congress passed the CARES Act to provide measured relief.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) distributed these emergency funds to each state for distribution to the areas unique to each community. Massachusetts received more the $2.7 billion from the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CvRF).

These funds provided emergency relief for individuals, businesses, and municipalities facing unexpected budget shortfalls and other economic deficits.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts created the Federal Funds Office (FFO) and charged it with monitoring the use of the CvRF funds by cities and towns to ensure proper spending. The FFO is a division of the Executive Office for Administration and Finance (A&F), charged with developing and executing cost-effective public policy initiatives and services to ensure the financial stability, efficiency, and effectiveness of state and local government. With 351 cities and towns to account for, the FFO's work is essential to prevent and mitigate potential fraud.

During the recently completed, constitutionally required audit of A&F, the Office of the State Auditor examined the FFO's implementation of necessary review processes and whether the office maintained a current list of vendors prohibited from receiving state contracts, in accordance with Section 29F (b) of Chapter 29 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The audit uncovered distressing findings regarding documentation, monitoring, and follow up practices.

During the period July 1, 2020 through April 30, 2022, the FFO did not collect necessary supporting documentation during its desk review process. Specifically, for one of the 35 desk reviews in our sample, FFO could not provide us with evidence that the expenditure was incurred during the period March 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021. If FFO does not collect all necessary supporting documentation, then it cannot ensure that it reviews each CvRF Municipal Program expenditure for compliance with the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act. This could then lead the federal government to recoup funds received through the CvRF. We also determined that while the FFO relayed all reports of waste, fraud, and abuse to the proper agencies, they did not conduct thorough follow-ups to ensure municipalities understood the findings and implemented recommendations such as enhanced policies and procedures. We recommend that the FFO meet with municipalities with desk review findings to evaluate the remediation steps. It is also advised that the FFO develop and document guidelines for conducting meetings with any municipality that had desk review findings.

Additionally, A&F did not maintain a complete list of vendors who have been barred from receiving state contracts. Currently, A&F relies on the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance to maintain a list of debarred vendors and provide links to other debarred entity lists on its website. According to Section 29F(b) of Chapter 29 of the General Laws, A&F must establish and maintain its own consolidated list including the extent of debarment restrictions, cases involving suspensions, or hearing dates. Without complete information, state agencies have a higher-than-acceptable risk of hiring debarred contractors. We urge A&F to move quickly to address our concerns and will follow up as part of our post-audit review.

Confidence in government can be improved when we demonstrate the effectiveness of detecting and preventing fraud. It is imperative that A&F establish policies and procedures in order to

sufficiently track all federal funding and maintain a consolidated list of debarred contractors to help ensure accountability for state agencies and taxpayers.

As always, if you have any questions or would like to share your story, please feel free to contact my office via email at Auditor@MassAuditor.gov or by phone at (617) 727-2075. And if you're ever in the State House, I hope you'll stop by and visit our team in room 230!

Yours in service,

Diana ◊

North Andover Town Meeting Fiasco

Kevin Dube
CHAIR, NORTH ANDOVER GOP COMMITTEE

This year's town meeting started off with a fiasco. Far more people than were planned for showed up which caused many technological issues. The only overflow venue set up was the café, and it filled quickly. While the early articles were being discussed people were still streaming in and the overflow was routed to the field house. Of course there was no A/V equipment set up there, and in the café the equipment that was present was quickly overloaded causing a near total disruption in the audio from the auditorium. The staff of North Andover CAM put in a Herculean effort to get everything up and working to get the issues resolved and get the field house wired as best as they could given the circumstances. After 48 grueling minutes town meeting finally resumed.

This did not need to happen. There were two highly contentious articles on the warrant for this town meeting, Articles 20 and 28, the $20+ million-dollar fields project and the MBTA zoning respectively. Proponents and opponents of both of these articles were working diligently to get their supporters out for these meetings. Social media was flooded with posts urging people to come out and vote. All youth sports were cancelled for the evening to allow as many people as possible to attend town meeting.

In prior years when such contentious issues are on the warrant, town meeting has been moved into the field house. We saw this with the pot farm and the Royal Crest issues. Why wasn't it done this time? Our Town Moderator, Mark DiSalvo should have known turnout would be high for this town meeting. Why didn't he move it to the field house? That would have mitigated all of the technological issues we faced. When we had to suspend the meeting for 48 minutes why wasn't it simply rescheduled?

Our town typically does a fantastic job of ensuring all citizens that wish to participate in town meeting can do so. This includes providing child care for those with young children. However, that child care ends at 10PM, and truly, who with a young child can be out after that time? The 48-minute delay this year pushed the vote on article 28 to 10:18PM, the hand count on that article didn't end until 10:30. Child care was over by then. Two hundred eighty-three fewer votes were cast for Article 28 than for Article 20, the hand count for which ended at 9:15. How many of these were disenfranchised by Mark DiSalvo failing to properly prepare for the massive turnout we had?

As to the articles themselves, I would love to see the middle school fields developed for our student athletes. However, I voted against Article 20. Unfortunately, our town is suffering from massive fiscal problems right now. Even before the recent revelations of our massive school budget shortfall we were already facing deficits. In the February 16, 2021, Finance Committee meeting our Town manager was already talking about "setting the table" for a prop 2 ½ override. This was due to massive increased maintenance costs on things like the new senior center our town was sold on without mentioning the resultant ongoing costs of these projects. In the same vein I asked what the new fields would cost to maintain. Rather than have a real plan, town manager Melissa Rodriguez rattled off a number for the 2017 replacement of the turf at the High School field. She failed to take into account either the fact that the new project has twice the square footage of the High School field, or the effect of the massive inflation we've experienced since 2017. Why didn't she have a solid number prepared? It is this kind of fiscal mismanagement and lack of accounting for ever increasing ongoing expenses that we have the schools' problem we have now, among others. Therefore, I had to vote no, and I'm happy enough of our fellow citizens did the same to defeat the article.

The MBTA zoning is a whole other issue. Truly it requires its own article, and I will be devoting a future piece on this matter. Suffice to say this is an incredibly bad deal for our town. The sites selected are actually very desirable areas for development. The town has in fact spent $150,000 on a study to bring an MBTA station to the Osgood Landing site. Not only would such a station make this site all the more desirable for development, it would also require us to add even more units to our quota. The Market Basket site likewise is desirable given its proximity to 495. Bear in mind the Market Basket is moving to the existing Kohl's location. While it is stated Kohl's will move to the former Market Basket site, will it? What is the most profitable use of that property for the land owner? Do we really trust our town government that has proven over and over again their absolute commitment to bringing as many high-density units into our town as possible?

Had enough? Feel it's time we changed our government, both in town and the Commonwealth at large? Please, reach out to me at northandovergop@gmail.com and get involved! ◊

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MA Senate Approves $58B Budget for 2025 Fiscal Year

Pavel Payano
STATE SENATOR, 1ST ESSEX DISTRICT

In a landmark decision, the Massachusetts Senate has unanimously passed a budget totaling $57.999 billion for the Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25). This significant decision followed three days of robust and bipartisan debate, resulting in the adoption of over 400 amendments and 43 roll call votes. The Senate added $89.6 million in spending for statewide initiatives and local priorities across the Commonwealth.

The approved budget underscores the Senate's commitment to fiscal responsibility while ushering in historic levels of investment in education, regional equity, and mental health. Senate President Karen E. Spilka hailed the budget as an investment in the future of the Commonwealth, emphasizing its role in fostering affordability, competitiveness, and equity.

Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, Senator Michael J. Rodrigues, echoed this sentiment, highlighting the transformative investments in education and workforce development. He stressed the budget's balanced and responsible approach, leveraging available resources without resorting to tax hikes or drawing from reserves.

The Senate's budget allocates $58B in spending, representing a $1.8 billion increase over the previous fiscal year. This growth is underpinned by a tax revenue estimate of $41.5 billion for FY25, which is $208 million less than revenues assumed in FY24. It represents nearly flat growth and is supplemented by $1.3 billion from the Fair Share surtax.

As the state adjusts to changes in its economy and unpredictable tax income, the budget for the upcoming fiscal year (FY25) sticks to careful and sensible financial management. It doesn't raise taxes, and it doesn't dip into the emergency funds we have saved up. Instead, it uses extra money wisely to keep everything in balance.

The Senate's budget plan also looks ahead responsibly by adding more money to the Rainy Day Fund, which is already at a record high of over $8 billion. If the Senate's proposal is accepted, the state's savings would grow even more, reaching over $9 billion by the end of FY25.

As part of our budget efforts, we led efforts to secure funding for several important district and statewide priorities. These priorities address critical needs and opportunities within our community, ensuring that we support essential programs and initiatives that contribute to our district's growth and well-being. They reflect our commitment to fostering a thriving and equitable community, where every resident has the opportunity to succeed and contribute to our collective prosperity. By investing in these diverse initiatives, we are building a stronger and more resilient 1st Essex District and cities like ours for both present and future generations.

NOTABLE 1st ESSEX DISTRICT & STATEWIDE ALLOCATIONS

YouthBuild: Successfully increased funding from $1.75 million to $3 million to support their efforts to combine education and workforce development opportunities for at-risk youth.

Massachusetts Downtown Initiative (MDI): $600,000 to the MDI for technical assistance for municipalities that wish to enhance the economic vitality and functionality of downtown areas by supporting activities like planning, parking management, and downtown branding/signage.

Greater Lawrence Family Health Clinic (GLFHC): $250,000 to support the expansion of the mobile health program, which provides essential healthcare services to homeless and underserved populations in Lawrence, Haverhill, Methuen, and surrounding areas.

MAN INC: $150,000 for enhancing entrepreneurial opportunities in the Methuen Arlington neighborhood.

Youth Development Organization: $75,000 for student success through STEM, arts, and leadership development.

Elevated Thought: $75,000 for expanding mural initiatives in urban areas.

Merrimack Valley Academy: $50,000 for youth sports activities.

Hispanic Image: $50,000 to empower entrepreneurs and women business owners in the Greater Haverhill, Lawrence, and Methuen area.

MakeIT Haverhill: $50,000 for workforce development in the Mt. Washington neighborhood.

Somebody Cares New England: $50,000 to address food security and homelessness in Haverhill.

FAIR SHARE SPENDING

The Senate's budget for the fiscal year 2025 (FY25) includes $1.3 billion in money collected from the Fair Share surtax. This tax is 4% on yearly income over $1 million. Since FY25 is the second year we've had this tax income, the Senate plans to use it for various important projects. These projects aim to make our state's economy stronger by improving public education and transportation.

Notable Fair Share Investments - Education

$170 million for Universal School Meals

$150 million for the Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) program to provide monthly grants to early education and care programs, which is matched with $325 million in funds from the General Fund and the High-Quality Early Education & Care Affordability Fund for a total investment of $475 million.

$117.5 million for MassEducate to provide free community college across the Commonwealth.

$80 million for childcare affordability, creating more than 4,000 new subsidized childcare seats and expanding access to subsidized childcare to families making 85 per cent state median income.

$65 million for early education and care provider rate increases, to increase salaries for our early educators.

$15 million for the CPPI Pre-K Initiative, matching $17.5 million in funds from the General Fund, for a total of $32.5M to support the expansion of universal pre-kindergarten, including in Gateway Cities.

$10 million for early literacy initiatives.

$7.5 million for school-based mental health supports and wraparound services.

Notable Fair Share Investments - Transportation

$125 million for Roads and Bridges Supplemental Aid for cities and towns, including $62.5 million for local road funds through a formula that recognizes the unique transportation issues faced by rural communities.

$120 million for Regional Transit Funding and Grants to support the work of Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs) that serve the Commonwealth, which together with General Fund spending funds RTAs at a record $214 million.

$23 million to support the implementation of a low-income fare relief program at the MBTA.

$15 million for municipal small bridges and culverts.

EDUCATION

Education emerges as a focal point of the budget, with substantial investments across various levels. The Senate Ways and Means FY25 budget proposal implements the Senate's Student Opportunity Plan by shaping policies to make high-quality education more accessible and by making significant investments in the education system, from our youngest learners to adults re-entering the higher education system.

In K-12 education, we uphold our commitment to fully fund and implement the Student Opportunity Act (SOA) by Fiscal Year 2027. We're investing $6.9 billion in Chapter 70 funding, an increase of $319 million over FY24. We're also raising the minimum Chapter 70 aid from $30 to $110 per pupil, providing an additional $40 million in resources to school districts across the state. With these investments, we continue to provide crucial support to school districts facing the growing cost pressures of delivering high-quality education to all students.

In addition to record levels of investment in early education and K-12, our budget removes barriers to accessing public higher education by codifying into law MassEducate, a $117.5 million investment in a universal free community college program covering tuition and fees for residents. This program is aimed at supporting economic opportunity, workforce development, and opening the door to higher education for people who may never have had access. The FY25 budget permanently enshrines free community college into law in an affordable, sustainable, and prudent manner across the Commonwealth, ensuring we don't leave any federal dollars on the table.

1st Essex District Chapter 70 Allocations

Haverhill $87,968,052
(6.46% increase)
Lawrence $286,250,811
(7.55% increase)

Methuen - $68,616,821
(6.08% increase)

In addition to education, the budget prioritizes community support, healthcare, and housing. Notable allocations include $1.3 billion for Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA), increased payments in lieu of taxes (PILOT), and significant funding for healthcare services, food security, and housing assistance.

1st Essex District UGGA Allocations

Haverhill $12,101,856
(3% increase)
Lawrence $24,176,627
(3% increase)
Methuen $6,694,913
(3% increase)

The Senate remains committed to continuing an equitable recovery, expanding opportunity, and supporting the state's long-term economic health. To that end, the Senate's budget increases the annual child's clothing allowance, providing a historic $500 per child for eligible families to buy clothes for the upcoming school year. The budget also includes a 10 per cent increase to Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC) benefit levels compared to June 2024 to help families move out of deep poverty.

In addition, the budget provides $87 million in critical funding to support a host of food security initiatives including $42 million for Emergency Food Assistance to assist residents in navigating the historical levels in food insecurity, and $20 million for the Health Incentives Program (HIP) to ensure full operation of the program to

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Lawrence Mayor Appoints Former Councilor As Director of Planning & Development

Lawrence Mayor Brian DePena has hired former City Councilor Carlos Matos as the new Director of the Office of Planning & Development.

Matos was most known as a District "B" City Councilor who went up against the developers of Lawrence High School to stop them from taking land from the Veterans Memorial Stadium and opposing Northern Essex Community College purchasing the Intown Mall on Common Street in favor of a shoe factory.

Matos ran unsuccessfully for mayor and then disappeared from the Lawrence political scene.

According to Mayor DePena, Matos brings to the role a wealth of experience, spanning more than twenty years across both public and private sectors. As Director, Mr. Matos will oversee a wide-ranging portfolio that includes the Department of Planning, Economic Development, Community Development, and Inspectional Services, encompassing both the Building and Health Departments.

Mayor DePeña expressed confidence in Matos's appointment, saying, "Mr. Matos's extensive track record, his expertise in strategic planning, managing high-stakes projects, and driving transformative change, positions him as a formidable force in Lawrence's development landscape."

Carlos Matos has deep roots in the community and has worked in several industries. He has a wide range of knowledge, including economic and workforce development, global client digital transformation, and financial services solutions. Carlos is experienced in navigating complex challenges and delivering impactful results. With the appointment of Carlos D. Matos, the City of Lawrence sets forth on a bold path towards inclusive growth and sustainable development, guided by a seasoned leader committed to the city's prosperity.

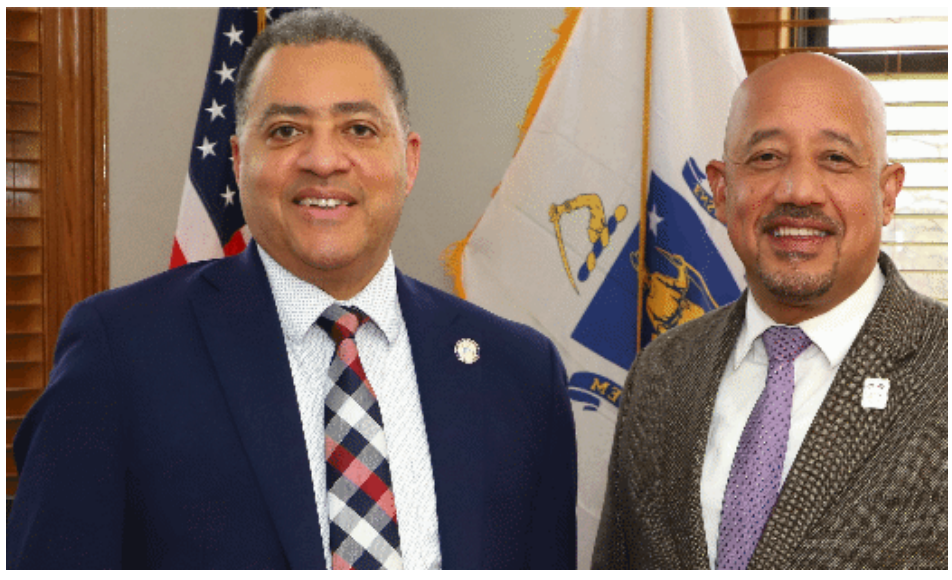
Mr. Carlos D. Matos' Biography:

Mr. Matos served as the CEO of Nube, Inc., developing transformative digital strategies that resulted in growth and greater efficiency. Similarly, at the Chelsea Business Foundation, Carlos applied his change leadership skills to successfully implement transformative strategies that resulted in growth and greater value, spearheading planning and development efforts, which led to economic growth, access to resources, and assistance to over 700 businesses.

Before this role, Mr. Matos was Associate General Manager at the $1.2 billion global technology firm Hexaware, where he led offshore and onshore teams of digital technology professionals to deliver a $50 million digital transformation strategy for the largest provider of mortgage-backed securities in the U.S. secondary mortgage market.

Matos also served at State Street Corporation as Assistant Vice President in the Investment Management Services' PMO/GCS business unit, effectively supporting internal business partners with global client solutions. In this role, he assisted with end-to-end onboarding solutions for global asset managers, asset owners, and insurance sector prospects and clients.

He utilized his deep analytical and consultative approach, as he had done in his prior position of Senior Government Services Consultant where, he applied strategic and tactical planning and developed performance measures for the Secretariat level of MA State government.



Similarly, as Vice President of Planning & Institutional Effectiveness at MassBay Community College, as a C-suite leader, he led all aspects of the $34 million organization's strategic and action planning process while managing a $10 million division of five major departments, including all academic non-credit program offerings and three technology business units. In this role, he implemented innovative long-term financial and technology solutions that saved over a million dollars annually and improved operational efficiency across the institution.

During his tenure at Northern Essex Community College, where he led as Director of their U.S. DOE Title V Project and Director of their U.S. DOL Third Tier Cities Project, a $2.5 million institutional effectiveness project, and the college's $2.2 million workforce research project, he analyzed and researched sector strategies to foster economic improvement in majority Latino cities.

Carlos earned a BA from the highly ranked Saint Anselm College and completed a master's degree in Regional Economic and Social Development from UMass Lowell. Mr. Matos is driven by a passion to improve people's lives, tackle the most pernicious problems, and build stronger communities for all. This passion has motivated him to reenter the public sector as Lawrence's Director of Planning & Development. ◊

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Exchange Club Sixth Annual Field of Honor

The Exchange Club of Lawrence and the Andovers will offer its 6th Annual Field of Honor, displaying nearly 500 American Flags on the North Andover Town Common.

This magnificent field of our nation's colors will be displayed from May 25th through June 15th, recognizing both Memorial Day and Flag Day.

As usual, the Field of Honor will conclude with a special ceremony commemorating Flag Day on Saturday June 15th.

The Exchange club estimates that some 1,000 people visited the Field of Honor last year, with many of the flags being purchased and dedicated.

Again, this year, individuals are encouraged to dedicate a flag to someone who has served our country or community (Andover, Lawrence or North Andover).

Typically, most dedications have been to veterans and people currently serving in the armed forces.

Others have been dedicated to police officers, firefighters, teachers, and others who have served our community. For $30 you can dedicate a flag to your personal Hero and donate the flag back to the Exchange.

Your flag will be part of the field; or for $50 you can dedicate a flag and receive the flag - flag, tag & pole, or triangle-folded and plastic wrapped with tag displayed. Your flag will be part of the field.

Flags may be purchased and/or dedicated on the website xclana.org. People may also purchase and/or dedicate a flag by sending a check, with the dedication to the Exchange Club 30 Massachusetts Ave. North Andover, MA 01845.

For more than 75 years the Exchange Club of Lawrence and the Andovers has served all three communities. It is a chapter of the National Exchange Club, a service organization focusing upon community service, Americanism, youth, and the prevention of child abuse. ◊

Organizations You Can Join to Help the Community

Katie Cook
VALLEY PATRIOT CHARITY COLUMNIST

Members of local Lions Clubs partnered up last month with The Movement Family (TMF) to service the Homeless at the Buckley Transportation Center on Common Street in Lawrence. Above are "Lion Dave" O'Brien, District 33N Governor, Liz Pettis of the North Andover Club, Nancy Gorman of TMF, Bob Murdock from the Daybreak Homeless Shelter in Lawrence, Valley Patriot Publisher Tom Duggan who is President of the Lawrence Lions and a member of TMF, with TMF founder Michael Gorman and Mark Alexander of the Dunstable Tyngsboro Lions Club, the 1st Vice-District Governor.

Service clubs truly are the heart of the Merrimack Valley! Typically, these clubs are professional men & women coming together to provide service to our communities, in line with their national organizations mission.

They are neighbors, friends, and leaders volunteering their skills and resources to solve issues and address community needs.

We have 4 great service clubs already in most of our towns: Kiwanis, Rotary, Exchange & Lions Club.

You may have heard of one or more of these, you might have been on a sports team as a kid sponsored by one of these clubs or you might see signs around town highlighting some of the great work they are doing.

Each club has its own chapter per town that you might want to consider joining or donating to. Clubs typically meet anywhere from once a week to once a month for their board meeting, usually at a local restaurant or business.

At these meetings there is often a guest speaker to help educate its members on a variety of different topics. Most try to have monthly, hands-on service projects in the community. Once or twice a year they also host a fundraising event. Dues for each of these organizations can range from $150-$500 per year.

Dues can be covered by your company, as a way for them to show support for their employees and to give back to the community they are operating in. Local, small businesses are some of the biggest supporters of service clubs.

So, what's the right club for you?? Here is a little bit about each of their individual missions and some examples of what local clubs are doing to help meet their goals.

KIWANIS INTERNATIONAL

Kiwanis International's mission is to "serve the kids who need us most." Their focus is on health and nutrition, education and literacy, and youth leadership development.

My personal favorite club (since I am the President of the Methuen Chapter) is doing some amazing projects in Methuen.

We installed mini libraries in each of the laundromats around town, with free books for reading while you wait or to take home. This is helping to give access to books to children whose parents may not have extra resources to spend on books or have time to get to the library. Kiwanis sponsors the Key Club in each of the local high schools. This is the high school philanthropy club.

This year, the Key Club kids at Methuen High hosted a book drive. During the Trunk-or-Treat the school systems hosted for the elementary school kids, these books were passed out as an alternative to candy. The Lawrence Club celebrated 100 Years of Service this year with a big Gala. Proceeds went to the Greater Lawrence Community Boating Program for the "Kiwanis Water Challenge."

Teaching kids to survive in the water is part of the club's mission. Thanks to the Salem NH Club the Kiwanis Logo is always seen around town on the back of the Boys & Girls Club Shuttle bus that they helped them get.

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

Rotary Internationals "Service Above Self" mission is to provide service to others.

Rotary members believe in a shared responsibility to take action on our world's most persistent issues with a focus on, promoting peace, fight disease, provide clean water, sanitation, and hygiene, save mothers and children, support education, grow local economies, and protect the environment.

The Salem N.H. Club hosts an annual food drive for the local pantry and serves dinner every week at a local church to families in need. The Andover Club sponsored and installed a Buddy Bench at Andover High School to promote new friendships.

LIONS CLUBS

The Lions Club serves locally in so many ways. They have fully developed programs, service resources, and organizational support for eight global causes and several special initiatives. Specifically, childhood cancer, diabetes, disaster relief, environment, humanitarian aid, hunger relief, vision assistance and Healthy Choices for Youth.

The Lions Club is most known for their "Mailboxes" for eyeglass and hearing aid recycling that can be seen all around different towns.

The Salem, NH Club has a box right near me at the B & H Gas station. The Lawrence Club President, Tom Duggan, went with his group to a local homeless shelter to offer free eye exams and found two homeless individuals who had serious eye issues.

The Lawrence club was able to get them the free financial help they needed to have their eyes operated on. Last month, the Methuen, North Andover and Haverhill Clubs teamed up to serve dinner in Lawrence for the homeless

CHARITIES: PAGE 9

Passing the HEROES Act

Estela Reyes
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

"Another Spring month has gone by in a flash. The Massachusetts House of Representatives met several times this month to work through the remaining bills before the end of the 2023-2024 Legislative Session. The process to pass a bill into law requires negotiation and a final agreement from the legislative and executive branches of our state government.

This process can be confusing to those who do not engage with it often. To promote clarity and transparency, I will summarize that process here. First, the House of Representatives holds a Formal Session, called for by the House Clerk.

All of the 160 MA Representatives are expected to be present, to debate and vote on predetermined bills. Formal Session also includes voting on amendments which can be filed by individual representatives, and may garner more debate. If you want to know how your Rep voted on specific legislation, all votes are made public and posted on malegislature.gov.

The Senate then undergoes a similar process to the House. If changes are brought up in the Senate, the bill will go back through the House, then again through the Senate until an agreement is reached. The final step is for the bill to be approved and signed by the Governor. The two branches have until the last day of session, July 31st, to cover all current bills.

In the week leading up to Memorial Day Weekend, the House unanimously passed the HERO Act. The HERO Act, titled An Act honoring, empowering, and recognizing our servicemembers and veterans, modernizes policy on veteran's access to mental health and healthcare, simplifies the process for veterans to claim benefits, increases their tax credits, changes formal language to be gender-neutral, and allows state-operated veteran homes to exist across the state equally. The State House Representatives honored Memorial Day with legislative action supporting those who have served our country and their loved ones. The HERO Act will next be taken up by the Senate.

I have been an advocate of the HERO Act since it was introduced by Governor Healey. Supporting our veterans in their reentry, and in living a meaningful life, should be guaranteed in Massachusetts. This bill will ensure those rights.

In May, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) individuals, culture, and history is nationally celebrated. AAPI Heritage Month allows time to acknowledge the barriers AA/PI individuals have faced, and to recognize their successes. The State House held wonderful ceremonies, expert panels, and educational briefings to highlight AAPI contributions and concerns in our state.

Lastly this month, thank you to all of the mothers out there. Being a mother is one of the most tiring yet rewarding jobs, often accompanied by other work and responsibilities. It is not easy, but it is worth it.

To those who are no longer with their mother or with their children, we see you too. All forms of motherhood, maternal care, and maternal figures, are precious."◊

Putting Patients First: The Future of MA Healthcare

Francisco Paulino
STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 16TH ESSEX

Dear Constituents,

I am writing to share a significant update on our efforts to transform healthcare in Massachusetts. As your State Representative, I have been working tirelessly to ensure that our healthcare system is equitable, efficient, and effective. Recently, I addressed the House of Representatives, advocating for the passage of House Bill 4643 - a landmark legislation that advances comprehensive healthcare reform.

This critical bill strengthens our healthcare system's foundation, ensuring it remains efficient, transparent, and sustainable for generations to come. I drew upon personal experiences, including my daughter Madison's accident and the exceptional care she received at Holy Family Hospital, to underscore the importance of a resilient and responsive healthcare system.

Madison's accident was a terrifying experience for our family. She was rushed to the emergency room, where the medical team sprang into action, providing life-saving care. Thanks to their expertise and dedication, Madison made a full recovery. But I knew that not every family is as fortunate. Many face barriers to care, including high costs, lack of access, and inefficient delivery systems.

House Bill 4643 addresses these challenges head-on. By strengthening regulatory oversight, we ensure that healthcare providers meet the highest standards of quality and safety. We promote health equity and access by addressing disparities in care, increasing funding for community health centers, and expanding Medicaid coverage. We control costs by establishing benchmarks and performance improvement plans, incentivizing efficient resource allocation.

Moreover, we prioritize transparency and public participation, enhancing data collection and community input. This includes establishing a Health Resource Planning Council, which will develop a state health plan that forecasts our healthcare needs and resources over the next five years. This proactive approach enables us to anticipate challenges and opportunities, ensuring our healthcare system remains adaptable and effective.

Our healthcare system is a complex web of providers, payers, and patients. House Bill 4643 recognizes this complexity and takes a comprehensive approach to reform. We engage stakeholders across the spectrum, from hospitals and insurers to patient advocacy groups and community organizations. We foster collaboration and innovation, encouraging the development of new care models and technologies.

As your representative, I am committed to ensuring that every resident of Massachusetts has access to quality care. I believe that healthcare is a fundamental right, not a privilege reserved for the few. I am proud to work alongside a dedicated team of lawmakers, healthcare professionals, and community leaders who share this vision.

Together, we are shaping a brighter future for our healthcare system. We are creating a system that prioritizes prevention over treatment, that addresses social determinants of health, and that recognizes the intrinsic value of every human life. We are building a system that is worthy of our highest aspirations and our deepest values.

Thank you for your continued trust and support. I am honored to serve as your State Representative and to be part of this historic effort to transform healthcare in Massachusetts.

Sincerely, Francisco E. Paulino
State Rep., 16th Essex District ◊

Monumental Loser Phil Thibault Unaffected in Dracut

EYE ON DRACUT

By Brian Genest
VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT COLUMNIST

How can Dracut miss Phil Thibault if he won't go away?

The town's most rejected perennial candidate—a nine-time failure at the ballot box—Phil Thibault has a new hobby: Applying for appointments on town boards and reapplying when he's rejected.

When there's an opening on any board these days, Phil Thibault rushes his application over to town hall right away. In a town of 34,000 people, Phil Thibault always thinks he's the most qualified person for the job. That's because Phil Thibault thinks he's the smartest guy in the room, no matter who's in the room. Just ask him.

And Phil Thibault always wants to be in the room, apparently. He's been lurking around town government for decades, keeping the seats warm on a bunch of town boards. If you've gotten Phil Thibault's self-centered political mailings throughout the years, you've seen the extensive list, but not a single accomplishment or new idea to benefit Dracut. Like George Costanza, Phil Thibault can't wait to tell anyone who will listen that he's an architect. You'd be hard pressed to meet a more self-absorbed politician. The thing Phil Thibault likes to talk about the most is himself.

Now, for the third time, Phil Thibault has applied to be on the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee, a position he was first rejected for more than a year ago by the Board of Selectmen. At the time, the board majority cited conflict of interest, saying Phil Thibault is an architect who conducts business in town and would be making the rules for those who hire him to do professional work.

Phil Thibault's buddies on the board, of course, thought letting him serve, despite an obvious conflict, was a great idea. Selectman Tony Archinski said failing to appoint Thibault would be "despicable." Selectman Santiago-Hutchings was "disappointed" that Thibault wouldn't be able to make the rules for those in town who hire him and fund his business.

Instead of reflecting inward when he was rejected, Phil Thibault lashed out. As inconvenient as it may be for him, the truth is that, in 2016, Phil Thibault resigned from the Planning Board after speaking with the state's Ethics Commission and then went on his buddy Warren Shaw's AM radio program to talk about it. Shaw's sidekick Shawn Ashe posted the audio recording on his Dracut Forum blog, so you can hear it for yourself in Phil Thibault's own words:

https://www.dracutforum.com/index.php/2016/08/28/phil-thibault-resigns-from-planning-board/

In January, Phil Thibault applied to be on the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee for a second time. Before his appointment came to a vote, Phil Thibault withdrew his application. But it was more than just his usual shenanigans. In his letter of withdrawal, Phil Thibault included some special shenanigans. Phil Thibault wants special treatment, so he can serve on the committee despite his conflict of interest. In fact, Phil Thibault thinks he's so special that he asked the Board of Selectmen to take special action and make the members of the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee special town employees. Isn't that special?

Speaking of special treatment, for months Phil Thibault was chiming in with his two cents at Zoning Bylaw Review Committee meetings, despite being rejected for a seat on that committee. Town Counsel finally reigned in Chairman Scott Mallory, letting him know Phil Thibault's participation was not appropriate. What is appropriate is treating all taxpayers and citizens equally, giving them all equal say, not giving Phil Thibault a special say or special treatment, no matter how special he thinks he is.

Here's something special: Phil Thibault's electoral history. In addition to losing a race for Housing Authority, Phil Thibault has choked in eight elections for selectman, so far, in 2005, 2007, 2015, 2016, 2018, 2020, 2021 and 2022. He's lost as many electoral contests as Hillary Clinton, Stacey Abrams and Beto O'Rourke combined, plus two more. Phil Thibault's not just the likely loser in every contest, he's the proven loser and proven to be Dracut's biggest loser. In his own mind, perhaps, that makes Phil Thibault a political guru and fully qualified to serve on every board in town.

Speaking of choking, in the time since his first application to sit on the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee, Phil Thibault has been rejected for other board appointments, including a couple of seats he applied for on the Economic Development Committee. Phil Thibault has another notable political distinction, too: The shortest candidacy for Dracut School Committee in town history.

When Joe Wilkie resigned last summer, Phil Thibault announced he was in the race and then a nanosecond later he was out. In between, Phil Thibault apparently realized he was unable to muster five votes from the Board of Selectmen and School Committee. (Members of those two boards ended up unanimously appointing Rob Sheppard, a guy who actually ran for school committee.)

Phil Thibault is always good for one thing: a laugh. Phil Thibault's latest committee application to serve as the fourth alternate on the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee is no exception. Spoiler alert: Don't be surprised if monumental loser Phil Thibault's next move is to apply for town dog catcher, village idiot, or both.

— Brian Genest is the producer and host of Eye On Dracut, winner of the Hometown Media Award for News, sponsored by Lucky Oil. ◊

CHARITIES: FROM PAGE 7

through the non-profit "TMF" or The Movement Family. Lions Club members from Saugus, North Andover, Lowell, Haverhill, Tyngsboro, Dunstable, Methuen, Lawrence, and Chelmsford helped set up tables, served food, sat and spoke with homeless addicts to understand the homeless and their needs.

THE EXCHANGE CLUBS

The Exchange Club "unity for service" works to make their little corner of the world—and beyond—a better, brighter place for all. Their service focuses on four main areas of impact: Family, Community and Country.

The national goal is prevention of child abuse.

Last month the Methuen Exchange Club hosted their 19th Annual fundraising event, The Taste of Methuen.

This super-fun event allows community members to come to one location to taste the local cuisine and raise money for their club to use on things like scholarships for area children.

The Haverhill Club is very proud of their focus on Americanism through their Hometown Heros Program. If you are driving around downtown Haverhill, you can see local Veterans Banners all around, highlighting our local heroes to honor them. Sarah Westcott, president elect of New England District Exchange told me the Haverhill club is giving over $20,000 away in scholarships this year to Haverhill Seniors.

As a business owner or leader in the Merrimack Valley there are so many ways you can be involved! Today's young professionals want to feel supported and encouraged by their employers. A great way to do this is to ask them what they are passionate about, see if this aligns with any of these service organizations and encourage them to join! Employees who feel supported stay in their positions longer! Helping to pay their dues and allowing them on company time to attend meetings and events is a small price to pay to have your companies name in the community in a philanthropic light.

Service clubs are an excellent way to jump into helping your community and make new friends in the process. All clubs in the area are accepting new members and would LOVE to have you come to check out a meeting.

Go to our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/heartofthevalley978 for a full list of clubs and contact information in your town!

Have a Charity or Non-Profit you would like to see highlighted?

Email HeartoftheValley978@gmail.com ◊

Lions Dave O'Brien and Laurie Cantwell were on hand to help TMF feed the homeless in Lawrence

Haverhill Lions had 12 members in attendance at TMF along with a dozen members from other local clubs.

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Free to all veterans and their families to honor your service and contributions to our community.

Events for kids like a bouncy house so plan on bringing your children and grandchildren! Hot dogs and hamburgers will also be served courtesy of the Methuen Fire Dept. and Cane's will be offering their famous chicken fingers! Bring lawn chairs and a beverage.

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Clear Path FOR VETERANS
SUPPORTING THE JOURNEY HOME

Methuen Senior Activity Center
HAPPINESS FRIENDSHIP EDUCATION NUTRITION RECREATION HEALTH

MBHP
Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership
A Carelon Behavioral Health Company

Service Dog Project, Inc.
Training Dogs for the Mobility Impaired

DAV
VETERANS NORTHEAST OUTREACH CENTER

The Heroes Act, A Necessary Ode to Vets Across The State

Ryan Hamilton
STATE REP., HAVERHILL/METHUEN

Last week, I proudly voted to pass a comprehensive Bill to enhance veterans' benefits.

The Massachusetts Legislature has gone forward with Bill H.4661, comprehensive legislation aimed at bolstering benefits and support for veterans across the state. This bill encompasses many changes, from increasing tax credits for businesses hiring veterans to expanding property tax abatements and introducing new medical, behavioral health, and dental assistance benefits.

One of the significant highlights of the bill is the proposal to increase tax credits for partnerships, LLCs, and corporations that employ veterans. Under the new provisions, eligible businesses with fewer than 100 employees could receive up to $2,500 in tax credits for hiring and retaining veterans for a second year. Additionally, annuity payments for blind, paraplegic, or disabled veterans would see an increase from $2,000 to $2,500 annually.

Municipalities would gain more flexibility in providing property tax abatements for veterans, with adjustments pegged to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Furthermore, the bill allows additional property tax abatements for veterans who already qualify for existing benefits, with the maximum possible amount equal to their current abatement.

In addition to enhancing existing benefits, the bill simplifies the process for veterans to claim their entitlements. It mandates retirement boards to notify veterans of their eligibility to claim credit for active service towards retirement benefits. Veterans would also have up to one year after vesting to contribute to the annuity savings fund to claim military service for such benefits.

Furthermore, the bill safeguards veterans from losing state benefits due to a cost-of-living adjustment to social security, ensuring they remain eligible for assistance. It also protects veterans who have received a discharge other than honorable based on identity or mental health issues.

Recognizing the importance of veterans' mental health, the bill proposes updates to the Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) to raise awareness about Extreme Risk Protection Orders. It directs the Department of Public Health to conduct campaigns focusing on suicide prevention among veterans.

The legislation modernizes language and organization within the Executive Office of Veterans' Services, ensuring gender-neutral terminology and expanding services to all state-operated veterans' homes.

Lastly, the bill includes provisions to honor and recognize veterans, such as issuing an annual Memorial Day proclamation and expanding eligibility

for special license plates to include Purple Heart recipients.

Overall, Bill H.4661 represents a significant step forward in providing comprehensive support and recognition for veterans in Massachusetts, addressing various aspects of their well-being and ensuring they receive the benefits they deserve.

As always, please don't hesitate to contact my office with any ideas, concerns, or questions at ryan.hamilton@mahouse.gov or 617-722-2090. ◊

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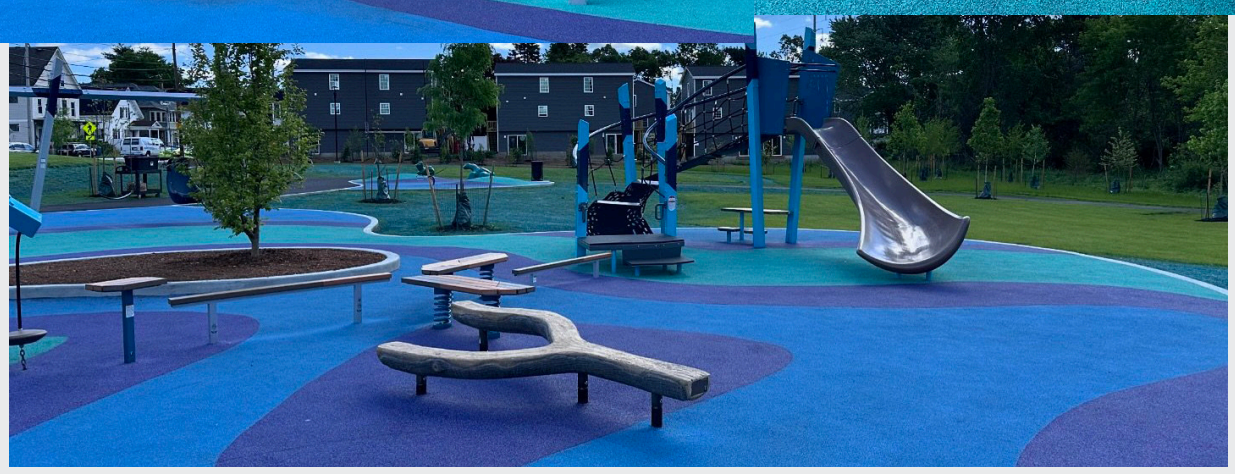
Welcome to the New Donovan Park in Lawrence



Mayor Brian A. DePeña and the City of Lawrence is thrilled to announce the grand reopening of Donovan Park, a major project that underscores our dedication to building parks for the future. We have transformed Donovan Park from 5,000 square feet to an expansive 6-acre recreational haven. The park, located on Andover Street in District E, was developed as a request made to Mayor DePeña by Councilor Stephany Infante. This project was funded through a combination of city and state resources with the collaboration of Groundwork Lawrence, the Office of Planning & Development & the Department of Public Works.

One of the highlights of the new Donovan Park is the state-of-the-art playground, designed with your children's safety in mind. The playground features a rubberized surface to ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for kids of all ages.

The park includes walking paths, playground and more!

Come visit Donovan Park and see how the City of Lawrence is investing in our community's future. Enjoy a day of fun and safety at our newly expanded and upgraded park!

Eagle Scout Candidate Scott Johnston Restores Dracut Memorial Park and Park at American Legion Post 315

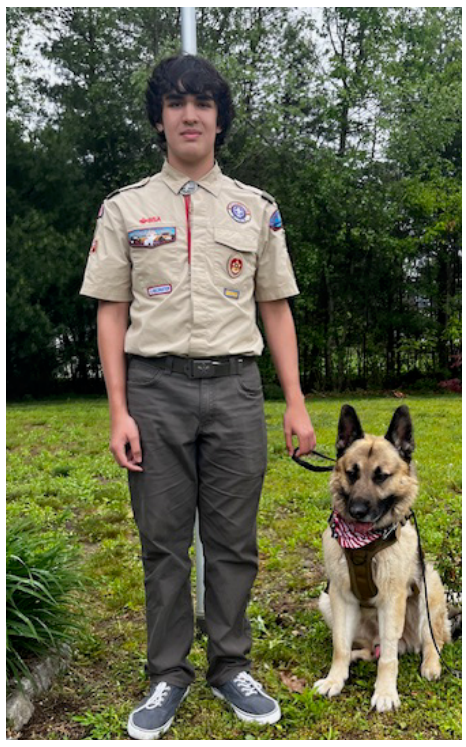
KANE
VALLEY PATRIOT MASCOT/COLUMNIST

Kane went on a field trip to meet Scott Johnston, a Troop 80 Life Scout at the Leo C. Roth Dracut American Legion Post 315. Scott who is16 years old and a high school sophomore completely restored the Schiripo Brothers Memorial Park on the Dracut American Legion property to an eye appealing dedication to the seven brothers whose financial support and manual labor led to the building of the post at its current location. Scott explained to Kane that the park was overgrown and tired looking. Scott knew the area had a lot of potential to be a great place to reflect and visit if it had a much-needed face lift. Also, the Schiripo brothers could be honored by having their Memorial plaque replaced and restored to its original state and the grounds manicured. Scott took a lot of pride in completing this Eagle Scout service project. Serving his community and military members is a value close to his heart.

So, Kane wants you to know more about Scott since he is both hard working but also humble. Scott has exactly 4 Merit Badges left to finish his Eagle Scout, which everyone knows is quite an accomplishment, paved by hard work and dedication to fellow scouts and community.

What strikes Kane is that Scott is 16 years old and half way through his high school career. Scott also has his mind set on attending the Air Force Academy upon graduation from high school. He is doing everything within his power to make that happen by tackling his academics with pride, playing both lacrosse and soccer, and of course very close to reaching Eagle Scout. The Restoration of the Dracut American Legion Park will be part of the several accomplishments completed in achieving his Eagle Scout.

Kane did some research to find out more about the Schiripo Brothers. He found an article written by Hiroko Sato published in the Lowell Sun on September 27, 2010. Kane learned that Fred Schiripo Army Staff Sergeant parachuted into Europe on June 6, 1944, on D-Day. In 1960 he took out a loan to construct the American Legion Post 315 at its current location in Dracut. His brothers jumped in to help. Fred Schiripo had 7 brothers and all but one served in foreign wars. That brother served as a Dracut police officer. He also had 8 sisters. Kane read that the Schiripo family knew the importance of the veterans and their families needing a place to gather. They were known to frequent the legion with their family and extended family.



Kane thought you must be wondering how Scott got all this work done on his own. It sounds like there were many steps. Besides the research on restoring signs, and ordering materials, there was the hard labor of restoring the grounds. Scott worked diligently on this as well as recruiting members of his Scout troop, his family, and members of the American Legion to help. To lead this project Scott did research, communicating and networking with businesses, ordering supplies, running a work crew, and the manual labor of the project. “Job well done Scott. I can’t wait to watch your journey.” said Kane.

So, Kane likes to talk a lot, but for this column it seems the pictures are more important. Thank you Scott for your dedication to your community and knowing the importance of history by honoring the brave men and women who served.

Woof, Kane Peaslee,
Columnist Valley Patriot ◊

Is There Voter Fraud? You Betcha!

And Here’s Why it Matters

Lenny Mirra
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

If there’s one prediction you can take to the bank for this year’s election it is that the losing side in a close race will almost certainly make claims of election fraud and a “stolen” election.

Democrats did this after the 2016 presidential election and Republicans did the same after 2020, leading to violence, vandalism, and riots each time. This is why election officials, now more than ever, need to work to not only make sure that our elections are safe and secure, but to also let voters know that they’re taking all measures to make that happen.

Some states are already doing this, like in Connecticut where a judge had to throw out the results of a primary election for Bridgeport Mayor because a video surfaced showing a campaign worker stuffing harvested ballots into a drop box. The judge cited the “shocking” evidence of “blatant ballot harvesting” and, worse yet, that the city was marred with similar accusations in previous elections.

Their new Secretary of State, Stephanie Thomas, is working with their state legislature to make improvements to their election system by, among other things, putting cameras on all drop boxes and making sure the footage is saved. This may not sound like much but it’s a lot better than states like Massachusetts which don’t even require such cameras.

Election officials here dismissively claim that our elections are already safe and secure and that no cheating ever occurs, but a quick glance shows this is wishful thinking. The Heritage Foundation has a website listing incidents across the country and you can see it at www.heritage.org/voterfraud.

There you can learn about Mark Atlas of Worcester, who was charged in 2013 for voting under someone else’s name. Or Courtney Llewellyn, an East Longmeadow town employee, who conspired with her husband to cast absentee ballots in her husband’s race for state office. You can also read about Enrico Villamaino who pleaded guilty to charges of larceny, interfering with an election official, forgery, perjury, and conspiracy to commit an unlawful act for changing the party affiliation of 280 voters. And then there’s former State Rep Stephen Smith who pleaded guilty to two counts of voter fraud where he obtained absentee ballots for ineligible voters and cast their ballots without their knowledge.

Thankfully there are people and

groups already working to improve our election system and one of them is Braver Angels, where yours truly is a member. I was chosen to serve on their Committee for Trustworthy Elections and after countless meetings with people on all sides we came up with an excellent report that you can read about at braverangels.org/trustworthy-elections/.

We came up with 727 unanimous points of agreement across values, concerns, and solutions. This report has distilled those into three principles:

- “Voting should be easy. Cheating should be hard.”
- “Every citizen should have an equal say in who will govern them; this is done through free and fair elections.”
- “The American government will fail if candidates refuse to accept any outcome other than victory.”

Ignoring the glaring flaws in our election system only increases cynicism and distrust, especially at a time when trust and credibility in it are at all-time lows. Election officials owe it to voters to not only investigate claims of fraud and cheating, but to be proactive in making sure our voting process is as safe and secure as possible. ◊

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AN ENTERPRISING VENTURE!

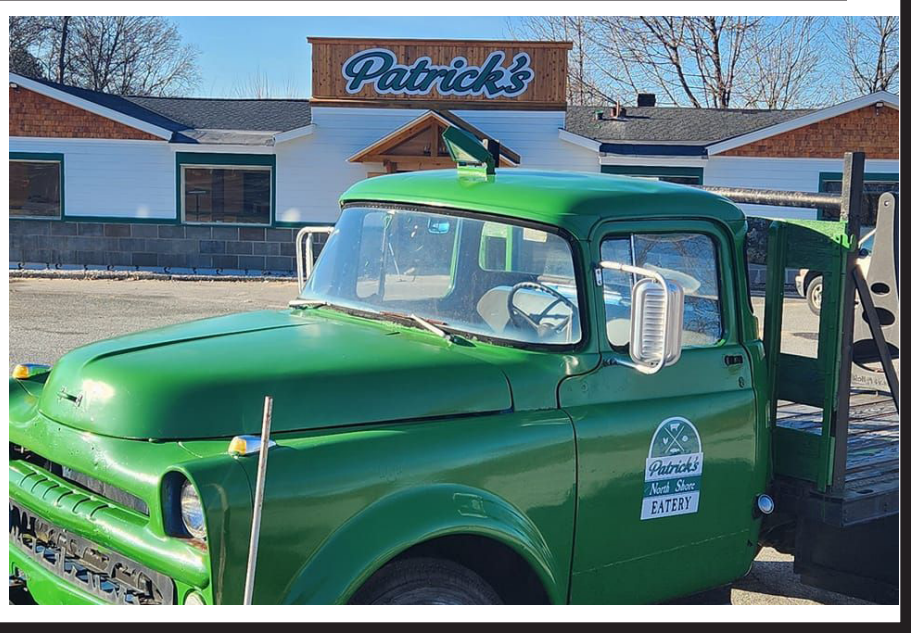
The North Andover branch of Enterprise Bank is saying goodbye to Benjamin Clark as he prepares to join the Enterprise Billerica team as their Branch Service Manager!

It is always exciting to see Enterprise team members continue to grow and develop within the Bank. Congratulations, Ben!

A RARE BREED OF DEMOCRAT!

It's not often you see a democrat elected official who actually loves this country, cares about our flag, and reveres the freedoms enshrined in our constitution, but Lawrence Mayor Brian DePena is one rare democrat who is a role model for young Latinos in Lawrence, insprinig them to love this country as much as he does.

Patrick's North Shore Eatery in North Andover is now open and serving the old Jim's Kabob menu with the return of Jim Mounir! Also returning is the old Tally-Ho chicken barb, and the original recipe of Harrison's Roast Beef!



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Study Finds Nearly 2 Million Adults in Massachusetts are Hungry

With exorbitant costs of living, increased grocery prices and the end of pandemic-era supports in 2023, 1 in 3 Massachusetts adults reported household food insecurity, according to the latest annual statewide study from The Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB), with the overall number increasing to nearly two million food insecure adults in the Commonwealth. The report, Food Equity and Access in Massachusetts: Voices and Solutions from Lived Experience, is a collaboration between GBFB and Mass General Brigham (MGB).

The study estimates approximately 1.9 million adults in Massachusetts are food insecure, an increase from last year's estimated 1.8 million adults. Hunger exists in every county across the Commonwealth, with Western Massachusetts and the Boston area seeing the highest levels of food insecurity – Berkshire, Bristol, Hampden and Suffolk Counties report over 45% of adults experiencing food insecurity in 2023.

Although many households experiencing food insecurity utilize federally funded programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Women, Infants, & Children Nutrition Program (WIC) and School and Summer meals, as well as Community Food Assistance Programs (food pantries, community meal programs or mobile markets), the study shows these programs remain inadequate at the current funding level to alleviate food insecurity in Massachusetts. Seventy-nine percent of households using SNAP reported seeking additional food assistance. Additionally, three-quarters of people who used two or more food assistance programs still reported some level of food insecurity.

The households experiencing food insecurity reported on average needing approximately $60 more per week for food -- a difference of about $2,000 a year. Statewide, the estimated amount needed among all households facing hunger in 2023 was around $1.7 billion to meet their annual food needs.

This year's study, conducted in collaboration with Mass General Brigham, is funded by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) through a U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) grant. The Greater Boston Food Bank also collaborates with MGB on several research community projects. One of The Greater Boston Food Bank's 600 partner agencies that supplies free and healthy food to is MGH Revere Food Pantry, a center that serves 80 families each week with nutritious plant-based food that promotes health. The pantry treats food insecurity and aims to curb nutrition-related chronic diseases such as high blood pressure, diabetes and obesity. Due to overwhelming demand, MGB is slated to expand its offerings by 50% in the upcoming weeks with support from GBFB.

"Food insecurity is closely linked to cardiometabolic diseases—including hypertension and diabetes—which are major contributors to premature mortality and reduced life expectancy across the Commonwealth and in the communities served by Mass General Brigham," said Elsie Taveras, MD, MPH, Chief Community Health & Health Equity Officer at Mass General Brigham. "Lack of access to healthy, nutritious food continues to disproportionately impact communities of color and other traditionally marginalized groups. With nearly two million adults reporting food insecurity across the state, we are committed to partnering with The Greater Boston Food Bank and others to find equity-based solutions to this public health crisis."

The research, led by Lauren Fiechtner, MD, MPH, GBFB's senior health and research advisor and director of pediatric nutrition at Mass General for Children, was developed with input from state, community, and healthcare partners, including GBFB's Health and Research Advisory Council. From November 2023 to March 2024, GBFB conducted an online survey of more than 3,000 adults in Massachusetts, collecting data from every income, gender, race/ethnicity, age, education, and region to ensure representation of historically unheard voices.

"The fact that 1 in 3 people remain food insecure is an unacceptable day to day reality for far too many in our state, one of the wealthiest in the nation," said Catherine D'Amato, president & CEO of GBFB. "Food insecurity is political, economic, and personal. Massachusetts may be doing all the right things, but without proper funding, benefits like SNAP and WIC are simply not enough to keep families fed, and many of them continue to make significant tradeoffs to put food on the table. As a state, we can fix this. We have the power to solve hunger here in Massachusetts."

Of the 3,000 individuals who participated in the study, those who experienced food insecurity reported having to choose between paying for food or paying for utilities (69%), transportation (69%), mortgage or rent (62%), medical care (55%) or school tuition (39%).

GBFB provides several public policy recommendations to challenge disparities and the current state of food insecurity in Massachusetts which are available in the report. ◊

Shaken and Stirred

Philippe Thibault
VALLEY PATRIOT DRACUT CONTRIBUTOR

Well, that was interesting.

Dracut's municipal election was held on May fourth with the only contested race being between three contestants, Dave Martin, Don Plummer, and Josh Taylor.

The latter won the election by a narrow margin of twenty-three votes. The rollercoaster ride the night of the election came when trying to tabulate all the votes and the Clerk's office was releasing numbers without aggregating absentee ballots, early voting, day of ballots and those "rejected" by the polling machines. The Taylor camp saw initial leads of three hundred plus votes quickly dwindling to thirty and then to twenty-three for the final count. Remarkably the voter turnout was around twenty percent. Extremely high for a municipal election for Dracut or for any other community in the area. I believe this election rivaled the Presidential Preliminary vote held two months earlier. Over four thousand residents exercised their civic responsibility.

And what a difference the increased participation appears to influence policy and direction.

The Board of Selectmen voting block is anticipated to remain three to two, although the voting will now be inclusionary to residents' participation rather than the exclusionary experienced under the thumb of former chair Alison Genest. On election night I had many inquiries about what committee or board that I would apply to and be granted an appointment to.

I do have the feeling my application would be more welcomed by the new leadership. Chairman Tony Archinski and Vice Chair Heather Santiago Hutchins do not seem to be intimidated by differing opinions. Refreshing that free thought will return to Dracut.

The Proper Farm is still mired in confusion and the secrecy of executive session has not dispelled any misunderstandings or rumors. The Board of Selectmen have released the appraisal and sale price with only 6 days to Town Meeting where the citizens will be asked to authorize the expenditure of some nine hundred thousand dollars of ARPA funds amid a projected three-million-dollar budget deficit.

A recent Community Preservation Committee meeting provided a forum for additional information. The Proper Farm owner was present, but the explanations appeared to cloud and confuse those in attendance further. There are competing issues regarding the purchase: the lack of transparency for the entire process, the use of ARPA funds as opposed to Community Preservation Act funds, making a purchase during a deficit, the preservation and use of acquired property by Dracut.

Each issue should be debated onto itself, but most of the arguments have been crosspoint. Ultimately the owner wants to offer the parcel without the town putting a restriction on the land at the time of sale. That doesn't preclude setting a restriction at a later date. Mr. Brox wants the town to decide on its use but does not want the town to decide when it is purchased. This may leave town meeting befuddled.

Housing topics within the town are still haggard and perplexing. Multiple residential projects under a comprehensive permit application, also referred to as 40B, have been proposed to provide some affordable housing. A project proposed in east Dracut known as Murphy's Farm with three hundred, four-bedroom units has garnered a steady stream of opposition. Rightfully so as it does little to provide a diversity in housing stock. The developer has been slow to provide any practical information to have a conversation with at Zoning Board of Appeals meetings, the granting authority. The MBTA Communities legislation has the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee busy with location residential districts that would permit a dense fifteen dwelling units per acre capacity. Two districts are being considered. One near Tennis Plaza off Lakeview Ave near the school complex and the other on Broadway Road in what is more of a business district. Oddly, the former is being considered because it is viewed as impractical to develop so it will not be built out and the latter could be a boon for economic development. In this microcosm the schizophrenia of a multi-member committee becomes apparent. The desire to keep Dracut looking like Dracut is akin to five blind men describing an elephant.

Town meeting may be as well attended as the most recent election. A robust body politic will be a long-desired sight. With the prepared articles on the warrant, it will surely be a bumpy ride. Perhaps Dracut should grant itself a "One Day Liquor License" for this event and really make it a bash: a Harvey Warrant Banger anyone? ◊

BLACK FROM PAGE 2

in post-9/11 war zones, including in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, are estimated at 3.6-3.8 million, though the precise figure remains unknown. This brings the estimated total of direct and indirect deaths to 4.5-4.7 million."

Given these horrific numbers and the relative disparity in the national security between Israel and America in their respective terrorist attacks, Joe Biden's decision to keep Israel from finishing the job is despicable if not downright anti-Semitic.

Barack Obama was roundly criticized when he talked about America's arrogance. For sure, America has done incredibly noble and civilization saving actions in our history, but we must also acknowledge our imperfections.

Taking a moral high ground that we have no business asserting against one of our closest allies is not who we are…. or maybe it is. Doing so for political purposes is sadly a level of duplicity to which our leaders have descended. ◊

PAVEL FROM PAGE 5

maintain access to healthy food options for SNAP households.

Addressing the pressing issue of housing affordability, the Senate earmarked $1.14 billion for housing stability, residential assistance, and homelessness programs. This includes substantial funding of $197.4 million for Emergency Assistance Family Shelters and Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT).

Other Housing Investments

$231.5 million for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP), including $12.5 million in funds carried forward from FY24.

$115 million for assistance to local housing authorities.

$110.8 million for assistance for homeless individuals.

$57.3 million for the HomeBASE diversion and rapid re-housing programs.

$27 million for the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP), including $10.7 million in funds carried forward from FY24, to provide rental assistance to people with disabilities.

The final FY25 Senate budget reflects a comprehensive approach to addressing the Commonwealth's most pressing needs while ensuring fiscal sustainability. A conference committee will now reconcile differences between the Senate and House versions of the budget before its finalization.

For more details, the complete FY25 Senate budget is available on the Senate budget website.

https://malegislature.gov/Budget/FY2025/SenateBudget ◊

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Medal of Valor for Lawrence Cops

Mayor Brian A. DePeña and Provisional Chief Melix Bonilla presented Lawrence Police Officers Luis Santiago and Angelo Kocagoz with the Department's Medal of Valor. This honor is a result of a recommendation from Sergeant Carmen Purpora and Lieutenant Shawn Quaglietta, which was endorsed by Patrol Division Commander Captain Fabian Guerrero and Chief Melix Bonilla.

This recognition stems from a mutual aid response, which was requested by the North Andover Police Department for an active shooter/barricaded subject incident on Waverly Road in North Andover on the evening of Wednesday, April 24th.

In early May, the Department received a memo from North Andover Police Chief Charles Gray, who was present and spoke at today's ceremony. North Andover Police Sergeant Brandon James, who was on the scene the night of the incident, authored the memo. Sergeant James concluded his memo by stating that "Officers Santiago and Angelo Kocagoz showed bravery, courage, and heroism during a situation that, because of its extraordinary circumstances, placed themselves into physical harm or possible death, and acted with deliberate intent and competency that shows their dedication to the well-being of those around them, that they took an oath to protect."

Biden's Fear Campaign Offers No Positive Future

Kenneth Willette
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

To inspire a nation suffering from unprecedented economic turmoil, FDR once declared: "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." If Biden ever got caught in a hot mic moment of complete honesty, he might counter by saying," The only political tool I have left is fear."

Besides promoting an irrational fear of losing our republic to his opponent, what is the vision of a Biden second term? Biden's celebrity surrogates are in full gloom and doom mode. Robert (Raging BS instead of Raging Bull) De Niro is ranting outside of Trump's trial, while Joy Behar is in full Trump Derangement Syndrome by declaring that MAGA hats should be affixed with swastikas.

Joy's illogical thinking is refuted by the fact that Jared Kushner, a proud Jewish American, worked on major trade deals, peace agreements, criminal justice reform laws and tax credits as a senior advisor in the Trump White House. Trump's own daughter, Ivanka Trump, converted to Judaism to align with her husband, Jared, and raise their children under that faith.

Both Trump and Kushner secured the Abraham Peace Accords, which normalized full diplomatic relations between several Arab nations and Israel. But that would disrupt Joyless Behar's nonsensical ramblings about prevalent right-wing antisemitism that even liberal Bill Maher has dismissed as untrue. And notice no rebuttals from ABC News leadership, as it hosts the dumpster fire known as The View—ironically and comically labeled as a news program.

In a CNN poll, it was revealed that a sizable majority of voters (61%) consider the Biden presidency to be a failure. The slogan Bidenomics reeks like rotten fish with polling groups. In a pejorative sense, Bidenomics is treated with the same historic warmth by the public as Hoovervilles were during the Great Depression. The Inflation Reduction Act certainly hasn't reduced inflation and hasn't cut back on the deficit. But they knew it beforehand because the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office called out the legislation for its blatant inaccuracies.

At first Biden desired to let the Trump tax cuts expire, but then he reversed course when he failed to realize how much of the landmark Trump tax reform package went to hardworking middle-class Americans. Biden still seeks a barrage of tax hikes on corporations and wealthy individuals to fund out-of-control government spending. His own government largesse has amassed an annual deficit of 6% of GDP, despite all the signs of a full economy. This is unheard of in American history.

In the 1990s, Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich and a solid GOP congressional majority cut taxes, balanced the budget four times, paid down national debt, and ushered in an economic boom. Tax cuts will bring in more revenue. It worked for Presidents Coolidge, Kennedy, and Reagan. However, courageous political leadership is required to not redistribute that additional revenue for patronage programs, but rather dedicate it exclusively for deficit reduction.

The 2024 Election has all the hallmarks of the 1968 campaign. Both time frames have faced pervasive urban crime, out-of-control campus protests, foreign policy controversy and an irreconcilable dissent within the Democratic Party. You might even get some Mayor Richard Daley level, election night shenanigans, with late returning ballots.

While the pundits predict a cliffhanger result like 1968, I honestly contend that based on trending demographics (fewer Hispanic, African American, and young voters are inclined to vote for Biden currently versus 2020), more favorability toward Trump on major issues and consistent battleground state polls, it is really Trump's race to lose.

Even among Trump's staunchest supporters, they sometimes bemoan his bombastic and overreaching rhetoric while still celebrating his popular and effective policies. Trump can often be his own worst enemy.

Nevertheless, Trump is right to condemn the lawlessness being unleashed in major blue-state cities, the hate-filled mob rule on college campuses, the reversal of 94 executive orders by Biden that opened the floodgates of illegals into this country, and excessive overregulation of individuals and businesses.

If you recently listened to Biden's remarks at the Morehouse College Commencement, you get a taste of the Biden Fear Factor. Biden will never approach the fresh optimism of JFK's New Frontier speech nor the brilliance of Reagan's Morning in America campaign.

When you are underwater in the polls and don't have a popular record (his approval rating is in the 30s), the incumbent must engage in gutter politics, pure fear, and negativity. No Reagan 'Shining City on the Hill' speeches here.

As a former Methuen City Councilor and current School Committeeman, I was there to bear witness to the worst negative campaigning in Methuen municipal history. I never engaged in scorched earth, negative campaigning. Because it really didn't work in Methuen, and it certainly won't work in our national election.

Even some reporters are waking up to Biden's nightmarish vision of post-election America. An award-winning journalist (please note he is not a fan of Trump) investigated his own news organization and found out that no Republicans serve on NPR's editorial board, nor are there registered Republican journalists at NPR. He resigned to protest the hypocrisy of a taxpayer-funded entity that is exclusively a Democratic club.

Articles are finally being written about the fact that the Democratic Party is suing the RFK, Jr. campaign to keep him off state ballots. So much for Biden's unswerving defense of democracy. Even ABC News is questioning why Americans should have student loans forgiven while other people pursued vocational careers, paid billions in taxes and don't receive a dime in relief.

With one last reference to 1968, there are striking parallels between how LBJ wanted to rapidly achieve a peace agreement with North Vietnam to aid his Vice President (and his own legacy) against Richard Nixon, and how Biden is now seeking a ceasefire to pacify protestors for his own interest. The raw politics of sacrificing an ally to achieve a favorable election result would make Biden and LBJ political soulmates. It was ultimately unsuccessful for LBJ, and it will likely produce the same result for Biden. ◊

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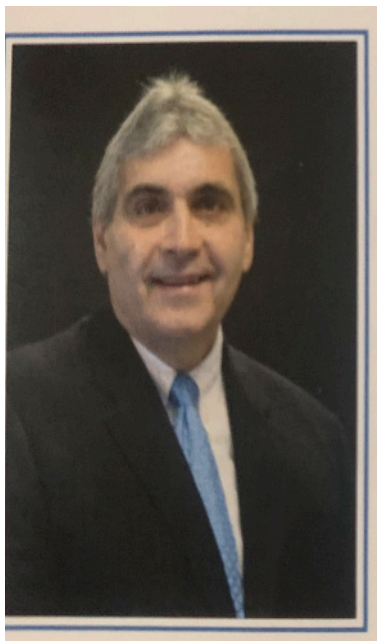

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TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

Had lunch recently with former Lawrence Mayor Willie Lantigua to discuss his upcoming run for mayor next year. Turns out Lantigua and I have some common interests these days. Who would have thought?

RALPH CARERRO

Last year I wrote a notebook item declaring that former member of the Lawrence School Committee Ralph Carerro was going to be tapped to be the new superintendent of schools in Lawrence as the city fights to regain control of their school system. The hate mail that came in was voluminous, mocking me for predicting who would be superintendent when the job wasn't even open and the state was controlling the schools. Well, well, well, here we are a year later: the former superintendent has resigned (as predicted) that state has engaged with Lawrence to return control of the schools back to the city and wouldn't you know it? Ralph Carerro was just chosen last week to be the new superintendent of schools. Now, how did I predict that? Am I psychic? Am I a genius? NO! I was able to predict that because, like everything else in politics, NOTHING that happens is random. 99% of the decisions made about government at every level are predetermined by those at the top of the power pyramid. It was patently obvious that all of this was going to happen a year ago because those in power were moving chess pieces around to MAKE it happen. I'm just a really good chess player.

THOSE OPPOSING RALPH

Having said all that, I found it interesting how the fringe of the Anti-American left-wing movement in Lawrence so vocally opposed Ralph Carerro's appointment to superintendent of schools because he doesn't hate white people enough and isn't willing to promote their Anti-American agenda in the schools.

A lot of people assumed that because I was predicting Carerro's appointment that I opposed it. But, the fact is, Ralph Carerro on his worst day is still better than any of the race-baiting, perverts who applied. Carerro is smart and he understands the corrupt Lawrence political environment and that is a huge plus. On the other hand, Carerro doesn't come without major flaws. He has no loyalty to anyone but himself, and has no problem blaming other people for his own shortcomings. Remember, it was Ralph Carerro as a school board member back in 1996 who voted for all of Superintendent Scully's spending on laptops and bagpipes, only to fire Scully for the excessive spending when the expenditures were questioned by the state. Expenditures that he personally approved. So, Mayor DePena needs to be mindful of that as he goes forward.

At the end of the day, however, Carerro is still the best pick for superintendent given how disgustingly "woke" the other candidates were.

PERRY SPENDING ON POLICE

Five years ago, Methuen Mayor Neil Perry ran for office railing against how much money was being spent on the police department. He took office promising to cut the amount taxpayers were shelling out for what he called "over-bloated" contracts that he called "illegal" because of the "excessive" payouts for the cops. Yet, here we are five years later and the contracts that Perry has negotiated has seriously increased the amount of money taxpayers are spending on the police.

Now, don't get me wrong, I'm all for paying cops more money. If I had my way, I'd pay every cop a base pay of $300,000 with double overtime and triple pay for private details. But, then again, I'm not the one who got elected misleading the voters to believe the cops were getting paid too much, only to pay them even more when he achieved power in the mayor's office. Next month, I will be publishing the actual dollar amounts of what the cops were getting paid when Perry was elected compared to what he's paying them now. I think the voters of Methuen are going to be shocked and outraged by those numbers.

ALZHEIMER'S SUPPORT GROUP

Hearts, Hugs & Hope Alzheimer's Support Group at Methuen Village meets on June 27th at 6pm at the Methuen Village Assisted Living and Memory Support Community, 4 Gleason Street, Methuen. Dealing with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia isn't easy, so it is helpful to share your concerns and personal experiences with others who completely understand what you're going through. You will also learn about proven strategies to help you better care for your family member. This group is available both in person and virtually. Contact Director of Compass Programming Deborah Cabral at dcabral@methuenvillage.com or 978-685-2220 for more information and to RSVP.

FOOD ADDICTION GROUP

Is your eating out of control? Join others with similar problems, including compulsive overeating, bulimia, and anorexia. Overeaters Anonymous (OA), is a free 12-step program that focuses on a complete change of living, free from food obsession. No scales, no fees, no shaming, rather encouraging a simple (not easy) change in eating to live but not living to eat. Weekly meetings (free) are held Tuesdays at 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm in the Carriage Room of the Amesbury Health Center, 24 Morrill Place, main entrance, first door on left. For additional info call 978-388-2552 or visit North Shore Intergroup website at https://www.oanorthshoreintergroup.org.

ZEIGLER ENDORSED BY AG ANDREA CAMPBELL

Former Methuen City Councilor and candidate for Governor's Council,

NEXT PAGE

WINSTON SAYS!

On Father's Day, Thank you to the guys out there fathering someone else's kids!

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Saturday, June 15th, 2024

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Eunice Zeigler has received the endorsement of the Attorney General Andrea Campbell last month.

"I'm incredibly proud to endorse Eunice Zeigler for the Governor's Council. Eunice personally knows hardship and loss, and has always dedicated herself professionally to ensuring others are seen, heard, and provided opportunity. A champion for diversity and inclusion, I know Eunice will bring wise counsel and incredible judgment to the role of Governor's Councilor."

The Governor's Council is an elected body that oversees the confirmation of judges, and members of the parole board.

The Fifth District includes the cities of Amesbury, Beverly, Gloucester, Haverhill, Lawrence, Lowell, Methuen, Newburyport, Peabody, and Salem and the Towns of Andover, Boxford, Danvers, Dracut, Dunstable, Essex, Georgetown, Groveland, Hamilton, Ipswich, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Merrimac, Middleton, Newbury, North Andover, North Reading, Pepperell, Rockport, Rowley, Salisbury, Tewksbury, Topsfield, Tyngsborough, Wenham, West Newbury, and Wilmington.

SUMMER HAPPENINGS

* AMESBURY DAYS

Sun. June 30th - 1PM - Pride Celebration

Mon. July 1st 7PM - Studio Two Beatles Tribute

Tues. July 2nd - 5:30PM - Kids Night

BRADFORD COMMON

Fri. July 5th 6 – 8:15 PM Abraxas Santana Tribute

Fri. July 12th 6 – 8:15 PM Johnny B & Surprise

LOWELL

Sat, June 15th noon – 6PM Juneteenth Jubilee Lowell

Free food, games, outdoor exhibit, authors and so much more

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NEWBURYPORT

Sat. June 29th 6:30 - 9PM Lantern Festival at Frog Pond Bartlet Mall

SALISBURY – Oceanfront Stage – 7:30PM free concerts

Sat, Jun 29th Steelfingers

Thu, Jul 4th Scott Brown & The Diplomats

Sat, Jul 6th The Beautiful Losers

Sat, Jul 13th Beatlejuice

LAWRENCE

Summer Farmers Markets: June 19th - October 26th (Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday every week) ◊

EMPLOYEES PAY IN LAWRENCE

Earlier this week, Valley Patriot photographer Rich Rusell made a Public Records Request for the following information from the City of Lawrence for the number of 'non union' employees working in for the City of Lawrence that reside in Lawrence and the salaries that they make and the same information for non Lawrence residents.

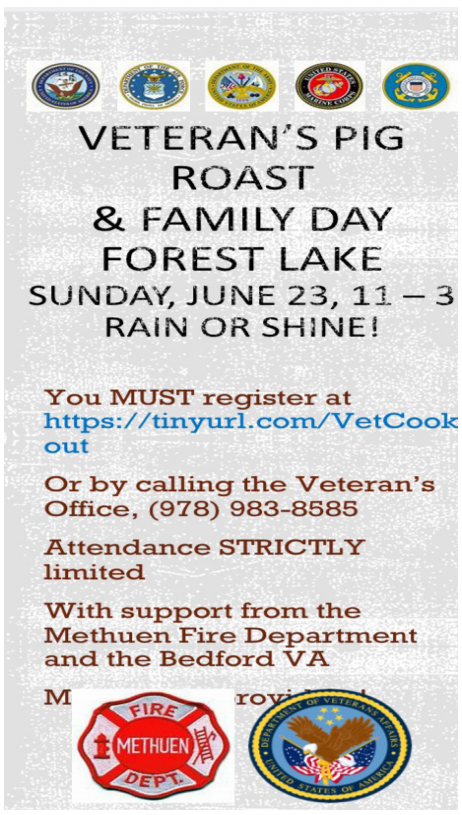
The results are back in record time. There are 97 'non union' employees working for the City of Lawrence making a total of $7,793,292.72 or an average $80,343.22 per employee.

There are 61 'non union' employees residing in Lawrence making $4,270,156.32 or 54.79% of the 'non union' salaries or an average of $70,002.56 per employee.

The 36 non resident 'non union' employees make a total of $3,523,136.40 or 45.21% of the 'non union' salaries or an average $97,523.40 per employee.

'Non union' resident of Lawrence employees make on an average of %10,340.66 or 12.87% less than the average 'non union' employee salary while 'non union' non Lawrence residents make $17,521.65 or 21.81% more than the average salary of all of the 'non union' salaries.

Continuing on, there are 12 of 61 or 19.67% of the Lawrence residents 'non union' employees making more than $100,000 while 16 of 36 non resident 'non union' employees or 44.44% making more than $100,000.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THE DOCTOR IS IN!

Screening for Prostate Cancer

Dr. Piere Ghassibi
MEDICAL CONTRIBUTOR

Greetings.

I am often approached by men about their PSA level. I wrote this in my book. I thought it might be useful and understandable to people, even if they are not clinicians.

Screening for prostate cancer:

Rectal exam is very unreliable for early cancer.

PSA is still controversial, but patients will want it. If you decide to do it, know that it has false positives and false negatives. Prostatitis, rectal exam, some meds, can affect the results.

If you do it and it is normal, then repeat it every year if the patient wants.

If it is very abnormal, refer to Urology.

If it is a little abnormal, ie, over 3 ng/ml, it may or may not be significant. Biopsy, radiation, chemo, have major side effects and the PSA could be a false positive. It also normally increases with age. Biopsy is not always reliable. What to do? Here it is as of the year 2024 :

Tell the patient that the best course is close observation in view of the side effects of biopsy.

Repeat the PSA every six months. If it increases by 0.4 mcg/l every 6 months, refer to urology, especially if the free percent PSA is less than 20%. (Normal prostate cells can cleave PSA to free it from its carrier protein. Cancer cells cannot. So a high free PSA is good. A low free PSA below 20% may be due to cancer because cancer cells cannot cleave it off).

Some add prostate MRI to follow the increase in size in cancer.

Pierre Ghassibi, md
ghassibi@hotmail.com

Methuen Scholarship Foundation Gives Out $45,000 to Graduates

Methuen Scholarship Foundation is proud to present the following $45,000 in scholarships to the following students:

The Texas Roadhouse Scholarship-Zain Ansara, Arthur Casarano, Carter Delano

The Bada Bing Scholarship-Joseph Casarano, Drew Eason, Ana Letourneau

The Frank H. Cann Jr. Memorial Scholarship-Alexandra Tardugno, Mackenzie Yirrell, Cameron Moreira

The Granite City Electric Scholarship-Hailey Boumel, Allyssa Cassidy, Jack Flynn

The Pest End Scholarship-Ibrahim Afzal, Logan Healy, Drew Lachance

LCW CPAs, Inc. Scholarship-Gabrielle Morgan, Gabriela Olivieri, Isabela Waniek

The Patricia D. Perry/Class of 1952 Memorial Scholarship-Calysa Alba, Anthony Danella, Kaitlyn Jajuga

Perrault Chiropractic Offices Scholarship-Yoy Parra, Samantha Pfeil, Brooke Soucy

The David Paul Carelli Memorial Scholarship-Abigail LaRochelle, Alina Tran

Broadway Tire and Auto Scholarship-Patrick Morris, Kiara Rios, Kaitlyn Dibble

Jobart/New England Outdoor Sheds and Gazebos-Madison Armstrong, Ava Duffy, Emily Jimenez

John Hancock Lodge AR & AM Scholarship-Ayva Aziz, Nicholas Caron, Laghdaryus Freda

777 LLC Scholarship-Joshua Boumel, Maribelle Spiridon, Jaylen Marsh

The Jersey Mikes Scholarship-Ashley Bowden, Sophia Galant, Derrik Kane

The Launch Scholarship-Gia Moretto, Casey Patterson, Efstratia Tikellis

The Norma Ventre Scholarship-Sadie Putnam, Mahsa Naeem, Riley Lyons

The Methuen Exchange Club Scholarship-Cole Leveille, Lillian Byrne, Nykole Monroy

The Methuen High School Staff Scholarships-Alexis Anthony, Arianna Baez, Jatsiri Contreras, Caleb Finch, Lily Finocchiaro, Jyahaira Moore, Rebecca MacLeod

The Community Supporters Scholarship-Sokratis Bousios, Angeliris Cabrera, Jiaralis Castro, Andy Cruz-Diaz, Mikayla Denaro, Myali Dominguez, Abigail Lee, Julissa Medina, Isabella Monsanto, Givenson Osirus, Kaylee Smith, Nasir Litchmore, Marissa Mahoney, Sadie Mazzeo-Ghirarda, Taylor Mcdermott, Joseph McDonald Jr

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Ground Breaking at O'Conell Park in South Lawrence

State Representative Francisco Paulino, Lawrence City Councilor Greg DelRosario, Lawrence Mayor Brian DePena, Lawrence City Councilor Marc LaPlant and Leslie Melendez at the groundbreaking of the O'Conell Park (also known as the South Lawrence Common).

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Campaign to Save Haverhill Campus of Holy Family Hospital to Target Top State Officials

Editor's note: An analysis of stories WHAV has reported over the last 10 years suggest what was once the separately licensed Haverhill hospital was set up to be abandoned in just such a situation as the one now unfolding. Evidence suggests the Haverhill and Methuen Holy Family Hospitals were combined under a single license a decade ago specifically to more easily allow the jettisoning of the former Hale Hospital, later Merrimack Valley Hospital. Over the last few weeks, state officials have declined to address questions posed by WHAV about risks of the now-shared license.

A local movement to save Holy Family Hospital's Haverhill campus is brewing.

As Steward Health Care faces bankruptcy proceedings, advocates warned at a recent City Council meeting the state may give up on the city's only hospital, as WHAV previously reported. Around 50 community members planned immediate action during a meeting at the Haverhill Public Library last night, including writing letters, talking to neighbors, getting more signatures on a petition to deliver to the governor and attending the state democratic convention in Worcester Saturday morning.

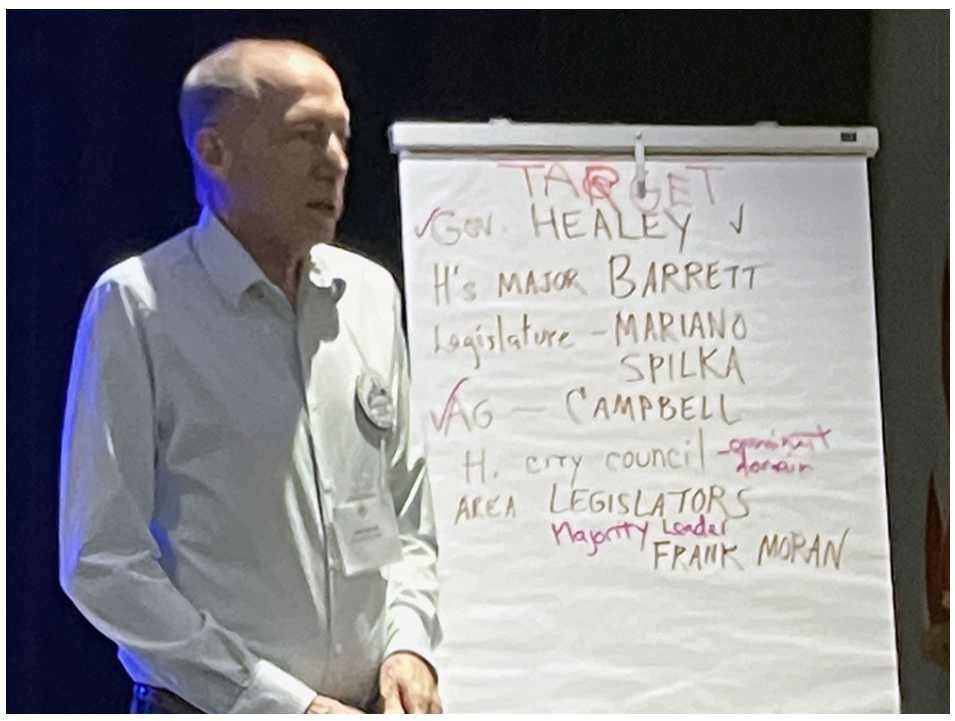
"And we have to be quick. We're almost out of time," Nurse Tammy Danis MacLeod said. "When we talked about stuff like this a year ago, the state legislators looked at us like, 'oh, you're the girl who cried wolf.' Well, the wolf's at the door."

An emergency room nurse said the hospital is already underequipped and understaffed. Despite having only two or three nurses, she said her department is functioning as a full trauma center. She explained, "Everybody's jumping ship because we're not moving fast enough to give them any answers. They're all afraid."

The Lawrence-based nonprofit Merrimack Valley Project put last night's meeting together. Lead Organizer Michael "Lefty" Morrill urged the crowd—made up mostly of people directly affected by the potential closure—to identify goals and strategies for a campaign. Union leaders and staff for some state legislators were also present.

Morrill stressed the need to target one powerful person with their collective action. The individual will hopefully feel the heat, he explained, and pull a lever to bring about meaningful change. Gov. Maura T. Healey, and perhaps state Attorney General Andrea Campbell, were selected.

"If you have that one target, that will give them the ability to be the hero or the villain," he said. "They understand that. They get it. We need to use that to our advantage because we don't have a million dollars to run a TV ad campaign."



Merrimack Valley Project Lead Organizer Michael "Lefty" Morrill urges the crowd to identify goals and strategies for a campaign to save Haverhill's Holy Family Hospital. (WHAV News photograph.)

Haverhill city councilors and Mayor Melinda E. Barrett have already pledged their full support. The mayor wrote in a May 29th letter to the governor, "Patients shouldn't defer care or travel further than they need for accessible, affordable, and high-quality health care. That's what will happen if Holy Family Haverhill closes, and it could be the difference between life and death for many people, especially those with long-term illness and in emergency."

Julio Mejia, of the Merrimack Valley Project, recently brought nurses, doctors, union leaders and concerned citizens before City Council. The nonprofit will hold another meeting June 11th at the Trinity Episcopal Church in Haverhill. ◊

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Property Sales, Foreclosures for MAY, 2024 in Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, North Andover. (All properties are listed in order; seller, buyer, price, address.)

Northern Essex Registry of Deeds

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William Francis Galvin
Secretary of the Commonwealth
of Massachusetts

ANDOVER

Mark B & Jennifer F Bentley, Leiha Macualey Tr & 64 Salem Street Nominee Trust, $2,700,000, 64 Salem St

Vas Realty LLC, Elena Behrakis Frankel, $1,748,000, 117 Bellevue Rd

Mark S Ratte & Julie P Ratte Trs & Ratte Family Trust, Sarah A McLean & John S Tsien, $1,700,000, 39 Porter Rd

Andrew R & Annette Hughes, Apara Sharma, $1,675,000, 18 Carter Ln

Robert F Brammer Tr & Linda C Brammer Tr & Brammer Realty Trust, Saravanan Ayyadurai & Ashwini Poopal, $1,650,000, 21 Keystone Wy

Yvon Cormier Tr & CA Investment Trust, Linda L DeMarco, $1,600,000, 27 Robert Dr Unit 6-2

Daniel J & Josephine A McKone Trs & Josephine A McKone 2021 Revocable Trust, Evan & Mariah Gogonis, $1,566,000, 9 Rock O Dundee Rd

Daniel J & Christine Beder, David H & Deborah J Wilfond, $1,500,000, 135 Summer St

Aimee Christian & Paul Cullen, Erin & Daniel Davies, $1,450,000, 373 South Main St

Sangal Family Realty Trust & Neeraj Sangal Tr & Susmita Sangal Tr, Mazin Jafar Sadik & Mariam H Bakir & Hussain Mohammed Bakir & Sajida Sadik Jafar, $1,349,900, 8 Harper Cir

Yvon Cormier Tr & CA Investment Trust, John Alexander Chartier, $1,325,000, 12 Cormiers Wy

Mary B Leonard Tr & Thomas F Leonard Tr & Mary B Leonard Living Trust, 52 Hidde Road LLC, $1,300,000, 52 Hidden Rd

Cecil Alexander Dean Tr & Jeanne Klauser-Dean Tr & Dean-Klauser Living Trust, Gaofeng Xu & Simo Zhou, $1,265,000, 18 Greybirch Rd

Yvon Cormier Tr & CA Investment Trust, Stephan & Lisa Latarri, $1,250,000, 7 Cormiers Way

Amanda Orr Harmeling & Mark M Harmeling, Susan B O'Brien Tr & Susan B O'Brien Revocable Trust of 2013, $1,230,000, 8 Swan Ln Unit 5-4

Janelle Cheverie, Molly C & Charles Mooney, $1,225,000, 4 Greybirch Rd

Chintan & Dhara Gandi, Jun Qi, $1,180,000, 49 Andover St

Mary Cambal & Roger Monette, Dennis Millman & Kimberly Daher Millman, $1,162,500, 2 Leah Way Unit 2

Robert B Marcus Tr & Marcus Family Trust, Pike School Inc, $1,150,000, 167 Hidden Rd

Joseph M Clementi Jr Tr & Clementi Irrevocable Trust, Brett Philip Irwin & Rachel Sara Irwin, $1,150,000, 15 Lauching Rd

Paul W & Lisa D Maue, Marianne M Seeber, $1,136,000, 40 Bellevue Rd

Darryl G Scofield, Jeffrey & Brigid Vallera, $1,105,000, 4 Deerberry Ln

Carla P Mueller Tr & Monica P Gallacher Est & Gallacher Family Realty Trust, Sean & Amy McCann, $1,077,000, 54 Chestnut St

Brian E Wright & Nancy Early Wright, Michele Chicoine, $1,052,000, 1 Locke St

168-172 North Main LLC, Kevin S Stillerman & Ryan P Lockridge, $1,000,000, 170-172 North Main St

WJS Realty Trust & Wilfred J & Susan A Schwarz Trs , Kenix Hong Louie & Bobby Lee, $988,188, 35 Lovejoy Rd

S George Kokinos Tr & Nancy D Kokinos Tr & Kokinos Nominee Trust, Jordan D Stack & Allison Zarick Stack, $940,000, 34 Pleasant St

Garry G & Sarah J Morissette, Kenneth J Gill & Kathleen Marie Anadale, $940,000, 33 Westwind Rd

Lawrence J Ardito Tr & James P Kartell Trust, Andrew Michael Bennett & Alexandra Lynn Bennett, $935,000, 29 Brady Loop

John P & Karen L Hayward, Eric D & Priscilla Ell, $930,000, 7 Hampton Ln

John S Mitchell Tr/ John S Mitchell Trust -2019, Yuanlin Li & Adam Robert Taylor, $890,000, 12 Burton Farm Dr

Joseph E Thibodeau III & Michelle A Thibodeau/Michelle A Keller, Destiny Fillmore & Peter Afouxenides, $875,000, 51 Tewksbury St

David O Nelson Tr & Katherine K O'Neil Tr & Vine Street Realty Trust, Daniel Michael Lopez & Caroline Hayes Lopez, $870,000, 5 Vine St

Kavita & Amalendu Sanyal, Samuel Nathan & Jessica A Krieger, $860,000, 116 Greenwood Rd

Daniel Michael Lopez & Caroline Hayes Lopez, Jeffrey & Samantha Prevost, $850,000, 17 Wildwood Rd

Elise P & Andrew A Caffrey Jr, Allison W Caffrey, $800,000, 20 Stinson Rd

Daniel C & Kathleen M LaPointe, Harry Holland, $760,000, 103 Lowell St

Michael A Patane, Moustafa Algamal & Constance Cammarata, $740,000, 6 Westwind Rd

Walter & Jenny L Lloyd, Michael & Marilyn Goshgarian, $675,000, 1 Ayer St

Matthew Witte Tr & Jodi Saia Tr & Matthew Witte Jodi Saia 2023 Living Trust, Lucas DeAngelo & Melanie Solo, $662,000, 28 Shawsheen Rd

Richard P Brenner, Cuba St 01810 LLC, $650,000, 11 Cuba St

Jeffrey C & Lisa M Ring, Riley & Jamie Fraser, $625,000, 10 North St

Gregory John Emmerth, Gianna E & Edward M Hall, $590,000, 285 North Main St

Julio C & Nicole M Rodriguez, Moises & Martha Kaplan, $560,000, 1 Power Mill Sq Unit 405A

Dylan J Roy, Eric Scott Wall & Kathryn Ami Eisnor, $540,000, 15 Topping Rd

Carol Ann Flaherty, Richard Eugene Li, $528,000, 17 Juliette St

Dana & Jody Repici, Mitchell Whalen, $315,000, A1 Colonial Dr Unit 7

Grace L Bouvier Est & Karin H Cambell, Donald Chang, $286,000, 16 Balmoral St Unit 405

Jennifer A Inman, Lynn J Stokes, $270,000, 3 Colonial Dr Unit B3-3

LAWRENCE

DCL Phase Two LLC, Paredes Management LLC, $1,210,000, 373-379 Howard St

Kimball Lawrence St LLC, Nana Osei, $1,200,000, 292-294 Ames St

DLC Phase Two LLC, Jacques LLC, $1,100,000, 50-56 Greenwood St

John D Lopes & Rachel Achu, Grace Real Estate LLC, $950,000, 499 Haverhill St

Eddy Guzman, Glendaly B Pena Soto & Domby A Toribio, $900,000, 139-141 Newbury St

Joshua M Medina, Barbara Tigere, $880,000, 208-210 Abbott St

Matias Villa, Rony Pena, $830,000, 161-163 & 167 Union St

Santander Bank NA, Diverse Real Estate LLC, $805,000, 555 Broadway

Norma Gabin, Carlos Rodriguez, $800,000, 72-74 Water St

Jeffrey & Diana Mora, Kathleen Fiorillo & Vincent J Ragucci IV, $780,000, 1 Lindner Ct

Mary Lou Lang Tr & Casey Family Realty Trust, Jillianne Tolentino & Fernando Estrella, $760,000, 110 Andover St

Labelle Maison LLC, Solerni Delgado Lopez & Carlos Manuel Guizarriz & Juana Lopez Valdez, $750,000, 24-28 Holly St

Idalinda Rodgriguez, Manuel B German & Alba N Almonte Cabrera, $700,000, 622 Haverhill St

Juan M Padilla Tr & JMP Realty Trust, Manuel Garcia & Maria Cruz Ambrocio & Teofilo A Cruz Ambrocio, $650,000, 321-325 Lowell St

Michael F & Renee M Viens, Terri Anne Ferrazzani, $615,000, 13 Ridgewood Cir

33 Investment Group LLC, Gregory M Ruiz Del Villar & Marifer G Cepeda, $612,000, 653 Lowell St

Moises & Martha Kaplan, Alex Espinal, $590,000, 12 Lorenzo Rd

Eva Maria McCarthy & Timothy M McCarthy, Brian Anthony Colindres & Joarky S Acevedo, $555,000, 26 Ridge Rd

Alex & Alida Mercedes Rodriguez Espinal, Junior Veras & Lydmarie Pagan, $553,000, 10 Cleveland St

Anthony J Beaulieu, Stephen Schulz, $513,000, 30 Lynn St

Carmen E Orsini & Jorge L Orsini, Maria Batista & Saul Cabrera, $480,000, 190 Willow St

Traci Talluto, Emma Cano & Maira A Leiva, $435,000, 135 Weare St

Sophia C Cormier, US Home Investment LLC, $422,500, 211-213 East Haverhill St

Luis Grullon, Lenin A Amparo, $405,000, 52 Walnut St

Dominga Quinones Figueroa, Casandra Jones, $400,000, 400 Hampshire St

Marie Jean Pierre, Marvens Clerjuste, $330,000, 44 Thorndike St

Gaurav Maharjan & Anita Bhandari Maharjan, Ioannis Karantanis, $315,000, 93 Beacon Ave Unit 5

Ramon C Perez Jr, Makonnen Pongo, $300,000, 312 Water St Unit 36

V Anthony Ansaldi Tr/Anthony Ansaldi Tr & Cameron-Bishop/Janton Trust, Callie Riera-Ansaldi Tr & Succession24 Trust, $263,000, 24-26 Inman St Unit 23

Kevin Steele Est & Tammy Steele , 18-20 Broadway LLC, $257,300, 84-86 Dracut St

David M Foderaro, Kennia Mejia, $250,000, 264 East Haverhill St Unit 7

Alberto Nunez, Alternatives Plaza LLC, $250,000, 374-374A Haverhill St

John P & Cherie Healey/Cherie Froton, Belkys D Ramos & Jose Reyes, $237,732, 23 Hobson St Unit 2

Kevin Pronovost, Michael Curley, $225,000, 31 Beresford St

V Anthony Ansaldi Tr/Anthony Ansaldi Tr & Cameron-Bishop/Janton Trust, Callie Riera-Ansaldi Tr & Succession24 Trust, $205,000, 24-26 Inman St Unit 26

V Anthony Ansaldi Tr/Anthony Ansaldi Tr & Cameron-Bishop/Janton Trust, Callie Riera-Ansaldi Tr & Succession24 Trust, $205,000, 24-26 Inman St Unit 36

V Anthony Ansaldi Tr/Anthony Ansaldi Tr & Cameron-Bishop/Janton Trust, Callie Riera-Ansaldi Tr & Succession24 Trust, $150,000, 24-26 Inman St Unit 5

Dale C David & Marie T David & Derek D David, Correa Properties LLC, $140,000, 264 East Haverhill St Unit 14

METHUEN

Reep-Ind Aegean MA LLC, Areit Metro North IC LLC, $54,400,000, 14 Aegean Dr

Methuen Properties LLC & Ocean Storage LLC & Bourne Acquisition LLC & 2527 LLC, Prime Storage Methuen LLC, $5,720,000, 14 Calumet Rd

Michael E Condon Tr & Tavern Realty Trust, Sweetheart Properties LLC, $1,450,000, 80 Myrtle St

F & B LLC, Purehealth Unlimited Inc, $1,000,000, 469 Merrimack St

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Fredis Manuel Guerrero Guzman Sentenced for Trafficking Fentanyl

BOSTON – A Lawrence man was sentenced today in federal court in Boston for his role in a fentanyl trafficking conspiracy.

Fredis Manuel Guerrero Guzman, 28, was sentenced by U.S. District Court Chief Judge F. Dennis Saylor, IV to 21 months in prison to be followed by two years of supervised release. In March 2024, Guzman pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to distribute and to possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of fentanyl and 100 grams or more of a fentanyl analogue; one count of distribution and possession with intent to distribute 40 grams or more of fentanyl; and aiding and abetting.

Guzman was indicted by a federal grand jury along with Melvin Antonio Perez Medina and Fraily Rodriguez Morillo in November 2022.

Between March 2022 and August 2022, Guzman, Morillo and Medina conspired to distribute and possess with intent to distribute 400 grams or more of fentanyl and 100 grams or more of a fentanyl analogue, in Lawrence, Woburn, Wilmington and Andover. Specifically, in March 2022, Guzman and Morillo met with a cooperating witness to negotiate future drug deals, including the price that Guzman would charge for fentanyl and cocaine. Thereafter, Guzman and Morillo distributed 50 grams of fentanyl to a cooperating witness in April 2022. In July 2022, Morillo and Perez Medina distributed an additional nearly 130 grams of fentanyl to a cooperating witness on one occasion, as well as over 560 grams of a fentanyl and fentanyl analogue mixture to cooperating witnesses on another occasion.

In August 2022, Perez Medina was arrested and found in possession of nearly two kilograms of a mixture containing fentanyl and a fentanyl analogue hidden inside of a cereal box.

On Jan. 18, 2024, Perez Medina was sentenced to 64 months in prison and three years of supervised release after previously pleading guilty to his role in the conspiracy. Morillo pleaded guilty on Feb. 12, 2024, and is scheduled to be sentenced on May 31, 2024.

Acting United States Attorney Joshua S. Levy; Jodi Cohen, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Division; Stephen Belleau, Acting Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration, Boston Field Division; and John E. Mawn Jr., Interim Colonel of the Massachusetts State Police made the announcement today. The Massachusetts Department of Correction; the Norfolk County Sheriff's Office; and the Watertown, Reading, Peabody, Hudson, Concord, and Waltham Police Departments provided valuable assistance. Assistant U.S. Attorney Alathea Porter of the Criminal Division prosecuted the case.

This case is part of an Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Forces (OCDETF) operation. OCDETF identifies, disrupts, and dismantles the highest-level criminal organizations that threaten the United States using a prosecutor-led, intelligence-driven, multi-agency approach. Additional information about the OCDETF Program can be found at https://www.justice.gov/OCDETF. ◊

REAL ESTATE: From 24

Palm Ave Rental LLC, Jeffrey W & Diane L Gwynne, $975,000, 5 Cardinal Rd Unit 178

Debbora Ahlgren, Ralph W Dell'Orfano Tr & Nancy L Dell'Orfano Tr & Ralph W Dell'Orfano Living Trust & Nancy L Dell'Orfano Living Trust, $925,000, 37 Pine Tree Dr Unit 91

Jr Builders Inc, Ryan & Natalia Poulin, $920,000, 2 Geramat Way

James F & Judith F Cropper, Fred E & Tara L Ordway, $850,000, 54 Phoebe St Unit 94

Martha A Buckley & Martha A Buckley-Paleologos, Jose Ramon Castro, $830,000, 9 Old Homestead Rd

Jihad & Emilia Moussa, Pascale & Rachel Moussa, $790,000, 33 Pelham St

Robert Mwangi, Dennis Mirugi & Margaret Wamui, $790,000, 602 Prospect St

Mark S Pelletier Tr & Joyce E Pelletier Tr & Pelletier Family Revocable Trust, Alex J Schlesinger & Christen Megan Harbilas Schlesinger, $780,000, 19 Harris St

Anita Adams Tr & AA Realty Trust, David J Privitera Tr & Karen E Henderson Tr & 23 Herrick Drive Nominee Trust , $760,000, 23 Herrick Dr Unit 93

Phillip & Jennifer Bonanno, Henrique F Alves De Souza, $729,000, 30-32 Brown Ct

Adonis Mejia & Joan Jasquez/Joan Vasquez, Jenny Hong, $720,000, 118 Armstrong Ave

Jenka Valdez, Daeson Lanceleve, $703,000, 33 Appaloosa Dr

Juan Vicente Galdamez, Delfino Gamboa & Clemencia Perez Barrios & Elsy Perez Barrios, $700,000, 5-7 Willow St

Beth H Vellante & Kathryn A Kelleher, Kyle & Shannon Zappala, $700,000, 11 Dundee Ave Ext

Jennifer Borislow Tr & Margaret Kurth Realty Trust, William Haneffant Tr & Lori Haneffant Tr & Haneffant Family Trust, $675,000, 26 Hopkins Cir Unit 22

Vincent S & Ann M Couture, Rodrigo Bandeira DeMello, $670,000, 11 Butternut Ln

Sheri & Peter N Johnson, Pascal Camille, $660,000, 140 Oak St

Philip Plagenza & Thao Nguyen Thi Plagenza, Dorothy Fortunat-Lalanne & Lesly Jude Fortunat, $650,000, 16 Dawes St

George P & Georgette R Abdulla Est, Roberto J & Logan Dourado, $650,000, 42 Woodburn Rd

Henry Gonzalez & Eliezer Silfa, Martin & Brenda Ssekalegga, $635,000, 10 Derry Rd

Michael S Couture & April Fluet Couture, Amy Lynn Quinn, $635,000, 8 Tyler St

Jose R Castro, Milagros Altagracia & Edward Lopez, $632,000, 31 Cochrane Cir

Scott R & Kate R Vachon, Lindsay & Celena Welenc, $605,000, 118 Vermont St

Jeffrey M Blanchette, Alexandra Romero & Mary Lou Terrero Garcia, $586,000, 3 Carrie Ave

Allan E Cuscia, Socorro Caba, $560,000, 34 Buswell Ave

Daniel & Maryanne Harrington, Chris R Jackson, $546,000, 16 Farley St

Delores J Hanson Tr & Hanson Family Trust, Francisco A & Nelkis M Ventura, $510,000, 29A Elm St

Jennifer J & Jose Santiago, Emmett & Cathleen Steinberg, $505,000, 3 Woekel Ter

Dora Visajel & Catherine Ripalda Visajel, Ajay Maini, $487,000, 7 Jane Rd

Orlando Soto Rivera & Iraida Ponce Cintron, Carla Renata Marvila DeSouza, $485,000, 107 Pelham St

John Brewer, Jessica & John DiMario, $485,000, 9 Somerset St

Stephanie Berthold/Stephanie Hoffman, Keith A Russell & Kristen Dargoonain, $475,000, 121 Pelham St Unit B

Joseph M & Kerry Broderick, Melisssa Carlson, $465,000, 6 Beedle Ter

Salvador Gomez, Samuel Cruz & Maria Murillo Melara, $455,000, 5 Meriline Ave

Ellen M Wholley Tr & Ellen M Wholley Revocable Trust, Nancy Salemme Tr & Nancy G Salemme Revocable Trust, $450,000, 21 Landing Dr Unit 21

Shane T & Jessica L Dixon/Jessica L Appleton, Michael Quevillon & Lacey Joyce, $425,000, 16 Marjorie St

Denzil D McKenzie, Frantzi Lamia Realty LLC, $425,000, 147-149 Merrimack St

Jairy V Gonzales Vargas/Jairy V Gonzalez Vargas, Micah Howeson, $412,000, 34 Linwood Ave

JM Brothers LLC, Israel A Rodriguez, $405,000, 10 Rosewood Rd

Janice E Goldonowicz & Bruce V Pankauski Est & Susan C Hubbard, Daniel Lisio, $400,000, 40 Palermo St

Ryan & Michele Lent/Michelle Hunt Lent, Ann M Keleher, $399,000, 1 Roverview Blv 2-214

Utica Capital LLC, Boston Granite Countertops Inc, $385,000, 8 Piedmont St

Caitlin A Clements, Matthew J Gordon, $380,000, 395 Merrimack St Unit 34

Alexander & Jennifer Crowell, Evergrain Orchard LLC, $375,000, 41 Brookdale Ave

Wilfred B Cayabyab, Mabel Valdez, $370,000, 2 Merrill St

Marcelina Zorilla/Marcelina Zorrilla, Minneh Mureithi, $330,000, 395 Merrimack St Unit 47

Carla M Sweetra Tr & ECC Realty Trust, Leslie Lennard Tr & 46 Ashford Street Unit 14 Realty Trust, $320,000, 46 Ashford Street Unit 14

Roger Farah, Yohanny Santana, $315,000, 419 Broadway

Robert & Lori J Moccaldi, Donna Bellanti Chastain Tr & DBC Pinewood Road Trust, $303,000, 46 Ashford St Unit 18

326 Merrimack Street LLC, Methuen 326 Merrimack LLC, $255,000, 326 Merrimack St

Lisa Enaire Tr & Mary McCabe Irrevocable Trust, Catherine Andrews, $250,000, 395 Merrimack St Unit 43

Robert J Palmisano Tr & Robert J Palmisano Revocable Trust, Alex Mercedes, $249,900, 61 Mystic St Unit 15

Cory Solano & James G Solano & Romily Solano, Otturboli Real Estate LLC, $200,000, 51 Ford St Unit F

William E & Paula J Hutton, Timothy Leger, $100,000, 31 Madison St

Ana M Lizardo & Ricardo A Olivo, Ana M Lizardo, $65,000, 44 Walton Ave

NORTH ANDOVER

Elbridge C Leland II & Lancing Leland, Marble Ridge LLC, $2,500,000, 11 Marbleridge Rd

Daniel G Donovan III Tr & Daniel G Donovan Jr Trust of 1998, H David Sheets & Carol Waddell-Sheets, $2,000,000, 133 Bonny Ln

Geoffrey R & Lisa C Plume, David Phelps & Cecily Bowen, $1,310,000, 46 Shannon Ln

Keith R & Allison M Hillis, Peter T Kelly & Tara Cromwell, $1,250,000, 584 Osgood St

Michael Levin & Yana Tsybina, Opendoor Properties J LLC, $1,211,600, 10 Jerad Pl

Wagner D & Anti Hwang, Nicole Huang & Wan Xi Ye, $1,150,000, 47 Cranberry Ln

David W Stroh & Jane C Von Maltzahn, Tian Zhang Feng & Shangdong Feng, $1,100,000, 36 Appledore Ln

John & Elaine I Lunde, Michael & Cara Rattigan, $1,065,000, 45 Avery Park Dr

Jin Gang Zhang & Xiaolei Qi, Brian O & Jacelyn E Sullivan, $1,040,000, 124 Colonial Ave

Laurence A & Nathalie L Travaglia, Barrett & Virginia Seay, $1,003,000, 46 Woodberry Ln

John J & Jodi B Inangelo , Nicole M Caron & Arthur Guthrie, $920,000, 1030 Forest St

Robert J & Debra Katseff Trs & Joint Revocable Trust of Robert J Katseff & Debra L Katseff, Jamie Kimberley & Julie Kline, $908,000, 140 Vest Wy

Qing Min Wang & Xiang Lan Chin, Andrew & Gabriella Goshtigian Callagy, $885,000, 135 Meadowview Rd

Keri P Douyotas/Keri P Pomeroy, Leandro Costa Darosa, $875,000, 2177 Turnpike St

Wayne L & Rebecca L Foco, Paul King & Kelsey Bowe, $865,000, 197 Hickory Hill Rd

Alyssa Hefferman Tr & Sable Family Irrevocable Trust, Geldin Fuentes Martinez & Ernesto A Fuentes Martinez, $825,000, 57-59 Lincoln St

Shahzad Zafar & Syeda Tabinda Shahzad, Niraj Nagpal & Anjali Budhani, $780,000, 24 Meadwood Rd

Ann M Giles, Nayara Souza & Michael Champagne, $750,000, 240 Andover St

Patricia F Daley Tr & Daley Family Realty Trust, Jason & Sarah Guarente, $730,000, 45 High Wood Way

Susan M Haltmaier/Susan H Todd, Eric Swirsky & Ashley Garner, $675,000, 90 Herrick Rd

Christina H Bicksler/Christina M Bicksler & Matthew Bicksler/Matt Bicksler, Elizabeth Pirrone & Colin Trainor, $640,000, 12 Pembrook Rd

Anne Marie Erler Tr & Calzetta Irrevocable Trust, Claire Leabman & Corey Keefe, $624,900, 476 Johnson St

Richard D Vitale, Nuket Dirico, $609,500, 8 Alcott Wy Unit 8

Jason C Soric & Juli Lee Soric, Anthony F & Deborah A Grasso, $580,000, 63 Millpond

Bruce A Siemering Tr & Four Eighteen Realty Trust, Serra R Langone, $555,000, 52 Marblehead St Unit 52

Joseph A Burturlia Tr & Betty/Joe Trust, Nicholas J Salvatore, $425,000, 10 Dewy St

Andrew & Rosemary Silva, Ralph Palermo, $401,000, 172 Chestnut St Unit 9

Orjald Metaj, Joaquin Antonio Ortega & Yannerys D Ortega, $380,000, 14 Village Green Dr Unit 10

Albert T & Darlene McGurl, Zachary K Sprague, $342,500, 148 Main St Unit A-515

Jeanne Renken Tr & Judy Bolis Tr/ Lamphier Family Irrevocable Trust, Christine Bibeau, $255,000, 68 Jefferson St Unit C

Edward C Andruss, Arena Investments LLC, $235,000, 50 Phillips Ct Unit 1

John Sapienza & Matthew Sapienza & Thomas Sapienza, Paul A & Belinda Ann Sapienza, $150,000, 843 Johnson St

Ryan & Taylor Riedl, Ryan Riedl & Taylor Riedl & Roberta Riedl, $100,000, 175 Olympic Ln

HERO: FROM PAGE 1

a 29-year-old Medford woman killed in the 2013 Boston Marathon Bombings. Speaking to Boston 25 News a couple of years ago on the charity event, "When I reached out to Krystle's parents initially, I told them that I'd come up with an idea that would bring a lot of enthusiastic motorcycle riders together in honor of her, benefiting her and her legacy," said John Joyce, organizer of the Medford Strong Bike Run. "She was from Medford, Mass., as we know I am a U.S. Navy veteran, and I grew up here. I took the initiative to say how far and how long can we make a scholarship last?" Joyce said in the past nine years, the ride has raised about $40,000 for the scholarship fund. "Every year, we bring back almost the same riders, which is amazing because when you see their faces come in and the transformation, they're usually the same folks that come back because they enjoy doing this for such a great cause." He went on to say, "Over 100 motorcyclists participated in this year's ride from Medford to Gloucester and past the Krystle Campbell Peace Garden."

Johnny was the featured entertainer at this year's Valley Patriot Bash. Valley Patriot readers looking to book Johnny Joyce, or attend a show, simply need to go to his website JohnnyJoyceComedy.com. He has appeared throughout New England, including several Valley Patriot Scholarship Bashes. The Valley Patriot Staff encourages our readers to take in one of his shows this summer. Johnny Joyce says with pride that he is a Seabee, a Teamster, a Veterans advocate, a comedian, the father of his son, Jack, and grandfather of his granddaughter, Emma. Modest, and easy to talk to, a tireless support of his community and our Veterans, Johnny Joyce is a "Hero in our Midst"!

The Merrimack Valley American Legion Posts ask all World War II, Korean War, and Vietnam War Veterans to call (603) 518-5368 and sign up for an Honor Flight to the Memorials in Washington DC! The Valley Patriot staff ask Veterans of all eras, to go to the American Legion's Website www.legion.org and join the American Legion. The Legion's mission is working with our Congress, our Nation's Veterans, and our community, preserving our Veteran's Benefits for future generations and serving all Veterans and their families.

John Cuddy served in the US Navy's Construction Battalions (also known as the Seabees) after retiring from the US Navy, he earned a bachelor's in history and a master's in economics from the University of Massachusetts on the Lowell Campus. He has been employed in Logistics at FedEx for the last 27 years. If you know a World War II, Korean War, or Vietnam War Veteran who would like their story told, please email him at John.Cuddy@Yahoo.com ◊

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TV TALK with BILL CUSHING

"Bill's TV Talk Mailbag"

Bill Cushing
VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

From time to time, my column will feature questions asked by readers regarding the world of TV. Feel free to email me with any questions you may have about TV at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com, and I'll do my best to answer you and may feature your question in a future column. Here's what we got!

Hi Bill, I'm a huge fan of 'Bosch' and 'Bosch: Legacy' and I heard there was a spinoff to the series coming. Can you give me any details on that? - Kristen from Salisbury, MA

You heard right. There is definitely a spinoff in the works. Maggie Q has been cast as Detective Renee Ballard in Prime Video's as yet untitled series about the LAPD's Cold Case Division. Rumor has it that Titus Welliver will make appearances on the series as Harry Bosch. The character of Ballard has appeared in 6 novels written by Michael Connelly. Q will make her first appearance as Renee Ballard in the Season 3 finale of 'Bosch: Legacy.'

I've been waiting for the new season of 'Cobra Kai.' When is it coming back? Is this going to be the final season? - Ben from Salem, NH

Ben, 'Cobra Kai' will premiere the first 5 episodes of its final season on July 18, while the second batch of five will premiere on Nov. 28. The final five episodes of the series will premiere in 2025 with an exact date to be announced at a later date. But don't worry, that's not the last you will see of this universe. A new 'Karate Kid' film starring Ralph Macchio and Jackie Chan (who starred in a 2010 Karate Kid film) is currently in production.

Bill, is 'The Old Man' coming back for another season or has it been cancelled? Thanks! – Julie from Andover, MA

Julie, FX's 'The Old Man' starring Jeff Bridges was definitely not cancelled. It was given a second season order in June of 2022, but production was delayed due to the strike. We're still waiting on a premiere date, but production on season 2 is just about done. Series lead Jeff Bridges said that Season 2 picks up just weeks after the events of season 1, and will be "upping the ante" as his and John Lithgow's characters go "looking for our daughter — either Angela or Emily, depending on who you're asking! But we're traveling all over the world this season," he said, including to Hong Kong, England and Afghanistan.

It feels like we've been waiting a very long time for new episodes of 'Yellowstone.' Can you tell me if and when the series is returning? – Andy from Methuen, MA

It has been quite a while since a new episode of 'Yellowstone' has aired. The last time that happened was January 1, 2023. At that time, we were told that the second half of the season would air later that summer. However, contract issues between the series star Kevin Costner and producers led to the shows abrupt cancellation, with the announcement that rest of the final season would still air. Then the writers strike happened which delayed things even more. Finally, we have a premiere date. The final batch of 'Yellowstone' episodes will premiere on November 10. However, two new spinoffs are in the works, one of which will reportedly star some of the original cast.

That's all for this mailbag! Keep the questions coming and we'll see you next time!!

If you have any questions about TV, you can email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future Mailbag column. Follow me on Twitter and Instagram @BillsTVTalk and on Facebook at BillsTVTalk for daily up-to-the-minute TV news and discussion.

Learning to Be Comfortable with Being Uncomfortable!

Peter Larocque
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

What? That is right people, and God is a master a making people uncomfortable to help us move forward into His Purpose for our lives, and we must deal with it. We ask, why do bad things happen to good people? Think about Jonah, God tells him to go to Ninevah which is northeast and he turns and goes west, in the opposite direction to Tarshish. He does all this to get away from the Presence of God.

Next, Jonah goes to Joppa and finds a ship that is sailing to Tarshish gets on board goes down to the lowest part of the ship lays down, and goes fast to sleep. But as he was sleeping a storm shows up so mighty it starts to break up the ship. The mariners started praying to their gods for help and began to throw the cargo that was on board into the sea to lighten the load.

Next, the captain of the ship goes to Jonah wakes him up, and asks him to pray to his God for help so that they would not perish. Then the mariners begin to cast lots to decide who it is that brought all this trouble to them and the ship. The lot fell on Jonah and then after a long conversation, they figured out that all that was happening to them and the ship was because Jonah was trying to run from the Presence of God! The mariners ask Jonah what could be done to make the mighty tempestuous sea calm again and Jonah replies, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you, I know all this is happening because of me!"

If all this that was happening to Jonah was not enough to make him uncomfortable, the Bible says that the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. I do not know about you, but at this point, if this was me, I would most definitely be uncomfortable!!!

We read in Jonah 1:17, "Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights." NKJV. This reminds me of another place in the Bible where it speaks of three days and three nights. We can read it in Matthew 12:40, "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." NKJV. We find a similar verse in Luke 11:30, "For as Jonah became a sign to the Ninevites, so also the Son of Man will be to this generation." NKJV.

Why am I telling you this? Because what Jonah and Jesus went through for God's people was most definitely uncomfortable!!!

The belief that just because one is a Christian, exempts you from experiencing any uncomfortableness is absurd!!! Yes, we as Christians are not of this world, but we are still here until Jesus Christ comes back. This world is broken and filled with broken people. Facts are facts!

Another example would be Joseph, the one God used to help Israel escape Egypt. His brothers threw him into a pit and then sold him into slavery. Joseph's journey from the pit to the palace was most definitely uncomfortable.

Uncomfortableness brings about feelings and emotions which are God's invitation to us to ask Him, "What is it that He wants us to know about the situation before us that is making us uncomfortable?" Why am I angry? Why am I sad? Ask Jesus what it is that He wants us to know. Jesus Himself asked His Father, "Can this cup pass by me" Is there another way of doing this? Doing what? Radically Saving us, Radically Rescuing us from Hell, and giving us a purpose to live, something we could not do for ourselves! Ephesians 2:10, "For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." NLT.

Feelings and emotions are not to be quickly dismissed. As I said earlier, they are God's invitation to ask Him why am I feeling this way. Then listen for His answer. His sheep Hear His Voice! This is all a part of our journey and relationship with Jesus. He does not want us wrapped up in religion, He wants us in a relationship with Him. There is no middle management in a relationship.

Now, collectively we make up the Body of Christ, The Family of God with Jesus as the head. We get our marching orders from Him. Then He places Pastors and Teachers and Evangelists and Prophets and Apostles in the Church as Gifts to the body of Christ to Build up and Equip the Church as it says in Ephesians 4:11-12, "He is the one who gave these gifts to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. 12 Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ," NLT.

Because none of us is perfect, except for Jesus, the Church gets messy and uncomfortable. With the help of God's Word and each other, community, we can become comfortable with being uncomfortable. Ask Jesus!

I love you all,
Have fun talking to Jesus.
Peter Larocque
peterlarocque@hotmail.com ◊

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